

April 16-17, 1998

Mandela angers his  
estors after  
attack

ANNESBURG (AP) — South African President Nelson Mandela is in the city with his ancestors after being attacked by a mob of angry whites on Tuesday. The 79-year-old head of state has been given a "warning" by his ancestors to tell SABC television, Mandela said, that he is not a "white man" and that he is not a "white man's son".

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ANGELES (AP) — The 31-year-old Stallone is being sued for life insurance. The lawsuit was filed by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which says Stallone is a member of the union. The lawsuit claims that Stallone is being paid more than \$1 million a year to be a member of the union.

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**Iraqi foreign minister arrives in Egypt**  
CAIRO (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al-Sahhaf arrived in Cairo Friday, saying he was bringing a message from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Mr. Sahhaf is scheduled to meet Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid Saturday to discuss "developments in Iraqi-U.N. relations since the Feb. 23 agreement with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan," the Arab League said Thursday. The agreement provides for U.N. inspections of so-called presidential sites for prohibited weapons. Mr. Sahhaf is also expected to meet with his Egyptian counterpart, Amr Musa, and then head to New York Sunday for U.N. Security Council meetings on Iraq's implementation of the agreement, the league said.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الرأي.

**Golan Heights Druze celebrate Syrian independence**  
MASADEH (AFP) — Dozens of Druze on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights demonstrated in support of Syria Friday in celebrations for the Arab state's independence, Israeli Radio reported. The Druze, members of a breakaway Islamic sect, marched through the village of Masadeh but did not clash with hundreds of Israeli police standing nearby, the radio said. Dozens of Druze also shouted congratulations across the Syrian-Israeli border near Majdel Shams to their Syrian family members on the other side, the radio reported. The 15,000 Druze living on the Golan Heights have refused to accept Israeli citizenship since the Jewish state occupied in 1967 Mideast war in hopes that Israel will return the area to Syria.

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## King, Netanyahu discussed 'comprehensive move forward' in peace making — Anani

By Alia A. Toukan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held unscheduled talks in the southern Israeli town of Eilat on Thursday on the deadlocked Middle East peace process, a senior official said yesterday.

In more than two hours of talks the two leaders, accompanied by Chief of the Royal Court, Fayez Tarawneh, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, and Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Oded Eran, focused on the stalled Palestinian-Israeli peace track. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani told the Jordan Times.

According to Israeli embassy spokesperson, Ro'ey Gilad, the Eilat talks also touched on bilateral relations.

Israeli Television reported that the Mossad's Ephraim Halevy was also present at the talks.

The meeting between the two leaders precedes the visits of U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross to the region in the coming week.

Dr. Anani said that King Hussein was looking for "a comprehensive political move forward in the peace process" following the upcoming visits of the British and American officials.

King Hussein spoke to U.S. President Bill Clinton twice this week, and once with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat about American proposals for Israel's long-delayed second redeployment from the West Bank.

The Eilat talks are the first held between King Hussein and Mr. Netanyahu since the two countries mended ties last month when HRH Crown Prince Hassan met the Israeli premier in Tel Aviv, after a five-month chill following the Mossad's failed assassination attempt on the life of Hamas politburo chief Khaled Misha'al in Amman last fall.

Since Yatom's resignation and the Crown Prince's visit, King Hussein and Mr. Netanyahu have spoken over the telephone several times, Dr. Anani said.



His Majesty King Hussein talks to reporters in the port city of Aqaba on Thursday accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali (Photo by Yusef 'Allan)

## Cohen to visit Amman today, Blair on Sunday

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen is expected here on Saturday where he will meet with His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

During his two-day visit to the Kingdom, Mr. Cohen will discuss the stalled peace process, the situation in Iraq and the modernisation of the Jordanian army, Jordanian and American officials said.

Mr. Cohen, who will come to Amman after his visit to Turkey on the second leg of a regional tour that will take him also to Egypt, Israel and Greece, is expected to hold a press conference with Dr. Majali, who also holds the defence portfolio.

Mr. Cohen's visit was scheduled to take place in the last quarter of 1997, but was postponed due to Iraq's crisis with the United Nations over its inspections of special sites.

"Issues that he will discuss will include the situation in Iraq, the peace process and Jordan's military needs," said a spokesperson of the Pentagon last week.

The spokesperson was referring to the talks King Hussein held last month in Washington with Mr. Cohen and other officials.

The U.S. administration approved the 1999 aid package to the Kingdom earlier this year, which amounts to \$225 million of financial and military assistance.

Last month, the Kingdom received the last batch of U.S.-made F-16 jet fighters as part of the "Peace Falcons" programme U.S. President Bill Clinton approved in February 1996.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Tony Blair will arrive here on Sunday as part of his first tour of the Middle East since his Labour Party took power in January 1997.

During his talks, Mr. Blair will discuss ways to resolve the peace process impasse. He will also discuss bilateral relations as well as Jordanian-European relations.

The British premier, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, will discuss with Palestinian and Israeli leaders new "ideas" to bring the peace talks back on track between the two sides.

## Palestinians mark prisoner day with hunger strike

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinians jailed in Israel marked an annual day in their honour Friday with a hunger strike and urged their leaders not to advance in the peace process until they are freed.

Representatives of the some 3,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails issued a statement calling on the Palestinian National Authority to continue to fight for their freedom.

"We can't talk about the peace process when prisoners are still held," the statement said.

In Gaza City, about 100 Palestinians including Social Affairs Minister Intisar Al Wazir held Friday prayers outside the office of the Red Cross.

"There will be no real peace without the freedom of the prisoners," Ms. Wazir said.

In the West Bank town of Bethlehem, several Palestinians led by Legislative Council member Kadura Farees set up a protest tent outside the Red Cross headquarters.

Mr. Farees said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani agreed this month that Israel would release 68 Palestinian prisoners to mark the 'Eid Al Adha Muslim holiday that ended last week.

Israel has not announced such a release but this month freed a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and two other members of the group.

Mr. Farees said Mr. Arafat had recently ordered that \$200,000 a month be allocated to the cause of winning the release of the prisoners.

In the West Bank city of Hebron, Palestinians held a sports festival in honour of the prisoners.

The Palestinian ministry of education said Friday that all schools would open classes Saturday with a one-hour lecture on the plight of the prisoners. Demonstrations in support of the prisoners were also planned for Saturday.

## Three Israeli soldiers lightly wounded in S. Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Guerrillas attacked an Israeli outpost in south Lebanon Friday, wounding three soldiers, security officials said.

The soldiers were lightly wounded and were treated at their base, an Israeli army spokesman in Jerusalem said.

The Shiite Muslim Amal militia said its fighters attacked an Israeli outpost near Beaufort Castle in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon.

The attackers opened fire with mortars and guns, the group said in a statement.

The area of the fighting is about six kilometres northwest of Marjayoun, the main town in the occupied enclave.

In another attack, Hizbollah guerrilla group said its fighters fired rockets and mortars at a second outpost manned by Israeli-backed militiamen.

The Voice of the South radio station, which is run by the South Lebanon Army militia, said a Lebanese civilian was wounded in the attack on the Ahmadieh outpost on the edge of the buffer zone.

Lebanese officials, speaking on customary condition of anonymity, could not confirm whether the man was a civilian or fighter.

Amal and Hizbollah are waging a guerrilla war to try to oust the 1,500 Israeli soldiers and 2,500 allied militiamen from the enclave Israel has occupied in southern Lebanon since 1985.

## Blair leaves London for Cairo on Mideast tour

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair left for Cairo on Friday on the first leg of a Middle East tour to push European efforts to break the deadlock in the region's peace process.

According to his spokesman, Mr. Blair is hoping to see some movement on side issues between Israel and the Palestinians, such as the opening of an airport, seaport and joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial zone in the Gaza Strip.

In an interview with the Times newspaper Friday, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook stressed that Mr. Blair would not be trying to broker a settlement on fundamental issues such as land and security.

"Of course, he will not be expecting to return with a [peace] agreement," said Mr. Cook.

"But his visit could help to restore some of the impetus that has been lacking in recent months."

The week-long tour of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories is Mr. Blair's first to the Middle East since his election almost a year ago.

The likeliest deal according to European and Israeli officials would concern opening the joint industrial park at Karni along the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, the least political of the projects.

While only a detail of the broader peace process, agreement on Karni would represent the first concrete achievement in negotiations for more than 14 months and could provide an impetus for progress on other issues.

In the Times, Mr. Cook confirmed that Mr. Blair would be focusing on the Karni estate and opening the Gaza Airport, which he called "key economic pressure points."

"Both would be valuable spurs to a wider settlement," he said. "If the parties are serious about making progress, then Tony Blair's visit can be a catalyst for it."

He continued: "One of the most disturbing statistics about the peace process is that the average Palestinian income has fallen by a third since the Oslo accord was signed in 1993."

The European Union (EU) is the biggest aid donor to the Middle East, and is funding both the airport and the industrial park.

Mr. Cook, who himself sparked controversy in March when he met Palestinian officials on a visit to Arab east Jerusalem, stressed Mr. Blair would play a supporting role to the "American pressure for progress."

On Thursday, Mr. Blair's spokesman was also keen to emphasise that international efforts to encourage peace in the region were "U.S.-led."

And unlike Mr. Cook, Mr. Blair is due to follow protocol meticulously in Jerusalem, visiting the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum and keeping any meeting with Arab east Jerusalem Palestinian officials a low-profile affair.

Mr. Blair is expected to express Europe's opposition to Jewish settlement building and view that Israel must carry out long-overdue troop withdrawals from the West Bank. But the messages will be put across tactfully, according to EU officials.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has made no secret of his hopes that the EU, of which Britain is the current president, will apply greater pressure than the U.S. on Israel's right-wing government to honour signed peace accords and withdraw from more of the West Bank.

Israeli officials have so far rejected EU mediation in talks with the Palestinians.

On Thursday David Bar-Ilan, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, reaffirmed Israel's position that only the U.S. is welcome to mediate in talks on fundamental matters such as land and security, but the EU could play "a very important role" in the interim economic issues.

## King: Aqaba projects should serve higher national interests

AQABA (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has emphasised the importance of the southern port city of Aqaba as an attractive region for tourism, economic and commercial activity, announcing that the city promises a prosperous future for the coming generations.

Addressing a Council of Ministers meeting in Aqaba, the King said that "the meeting in the port city should serve as a positive turning point for this dear part of the homeland," emphasising the need for sound and careful planning in order to develop the Aqaba region in a manner that would contribute to the overall development of the Kingdom.

At the meeting, which was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Chief of the Royal Court Fayez Tarawneh, and the King's advisor, Salah Abu Zeid, King Hussein underlined the importance of the time factor in the course of implementing development projects.

He said that the projects should serve the higher national interests versus personal and selfish interests, adding that even his own residence in Aqaba should not stand as an obstacle in the path of the region's development.

King Hussein demanded that the government take whatever necessary steps needed to safeguard the cleanliness of the region and the protection of the environment especially in Wadi Rum and the coral reefs of Aqaba.

The King later told journalists that the meeting provided a good opportunity to review plans and actions already accomplished in the Aqaba region. He also called on the public and private sectors of Aqaba to play an active role in the development of their region.

Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour said that the ministers passed a number of decisions concerning the use of land, city planning and organisation with particular focus on the old Shallah district.

The question of water use for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes was also discussed, said the minister.

According to Dr. Ensour, the Cabinet decided to entrust a study on converting the Aqaba region into a free trade zone to a consultant, who should finish the job in six months. He expressed hope that the region could be declared a free trade zone in early 1999.

Dr. Ensour also announced that the Council of Ministers decided to amend legislation to allow non-Jordanian ship ownership up to 10% per cent, up from the current maximum of 50 per cent.

The Cabinet decided to grant the United Land Transport Company a plot of 1000 dunums of land to establish a land transport terminal for trucks at the Rashdieh district and to expand the Aqaba International Airport.

The Cabinet also decided on regulations concerning the unloading of goods and storage at the port, as well as catering for vessels. It also decided on proposals to boost the capabilities of the Aqaba Airport fire engines and establish a central laboratory for testing goods.

During the session the council listened to reports by eight ministers about their respective administrations' functions.

## Tarawneh elected chairman of Jordan Press Foundation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The general assembly of the Jordan Press Foundation (JPF), publisher of Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times dailies, on Thursday elected a new board of directors chaired by Abdul Salam Tarawneh.

Mr. Tarawneh replaces Mahmoud Al Kayed who served between 1986 and 1988 and since 1990 as chairman representing the private sector. Mr. Al Kayed was also chief editor between 1976-1986.

The members of the new board are: Mohammad Al Amad, who was also elected vice chairman, Ibrahim Abul Ragheb, Azmi Mahmoud Al Kayed and a representative of the Arab Bank (all from the private sector). The other members representing the public sector's Social Security Corporation include Hisham Al Haj Hassan, Fadhallah Amrani, Ali Tarawneh and Abdul Noor Habaibeh. Mr. Tarawneh represents the Jordan Investment Corporation.

Mr. Tarawneh was born in Karak in 1942, holds a B.A. degree in English from Damascus University, and a diploma in media and information from Syracuse University in the U.S.

Until his new appointment, Mr. Tarawneh had served as director of information at HRH Crown Prince Hassan's office. He previously served as chief editor of Al Dustour daily and vice chairman of Al Dustour's board of directors. Before that he was chief editor of the government-owned Sawt Al Shaab daily which closed in 1994.

Mr. Tarawneh is member of the Jordan Press Association and the Arab Federation of Journalists.

Besides electing a new board the JPF general assembly endorsed the foundation's 1997 administrative and financial reports and decided to distribute dividends at the rate of 60 per cent of capital which is equivalent to 600 fils for every share.

It also approved raising the capital to JD3 million and to distribute half a share for each share to the shareholders gratis.

According to the reports, the foundation's overall profits for last year amounted to JD2.09 million, the revenues amounted to JD10.8 million and the assets value rose by nine per cent to reach JD6.8 million. The net capital now stands at JD4.1 million. The JPF is owned by the government investment arm, the Jordan Investment Corporation (15%), the Social Security Corporation (46%) and the rest by the private sector, individuals and institutions.



Abdul Salam Tarawneh

By Michael Georgy  
Reuters

CANA — Mohammad Moussawi held his nine-year-old son's hand and showed him gruesome photographs hanging on a board near a row of tombstones.

He wanted the child to know that the torn limbs and charred bodies on display were the work of Israeli gunners who killed more than 100 Lebanese civilians sheltering in a U.N. camp during a military offensive on south Lebanon.

"I brought him here to show what the future holds. I want to make sure that he kills Israelis and my grandchildren kill Israelis," said Mr. Moussawi.

On April 18, 1996, high-explosive Israeli shells slammed into the U.N. camp at Cana, killing men, women and children in an attack on Hizbollah guerrillas. Israel said it was a mistake.

Israeli troops have occupied south Lebanon since 1985 when Israel set up a self-declared "security zone" to protect its northern settlements from cross-border guerrilla attacks.

Now Israel is trying to find a safe way to disentangle its soldiers from the region following heavy battle-field losses in a war of attrition with Hizbollah fighters.

But even if Israel leaves, hatred for the Jewish state is being passed from one generation to the next in villages across south Lebanon.

Cana is a potent example of how decades of Israeli operations carried out in the name of security have backfired, creating new enemies on the ground.

"I am ready to strap explosives around my waist to commit suicide attacks against Israel," said Jameel Salameh, a junior.

Thar's the kind of hostility that is fuelling an Israeli debate over the wisdom of keeping troops in a 15-kilometre-deep south Lebanon occupation zone.

Heavy losses fuel debate over occupation.

Last year, 39 Israeli soldiers were killed in south Lebanon — the heaviest Israeli death toll since the occupation zone was carved out.

Twelve Israeli soldiers died in a single incident when Hizbollah guerrillas from the Shiite Amal movement and the Lebanese army thwarted a commando operation last September north of the occupation zone.

On April 1, Israel adopted a 20-year-old U.N. resolution demanding its immediate withdrawal from south Lebanon.

But leaving will not be easy.

Israel said it would pull out on condition that the Lebanese government deploy the army in the area to prevent cross-border guerrilla attacks.

Lebanon has refused to provide security guarantees

(Continued on page 3)



## Israel frees longest-held 'administrative detainee'

EL BIREH (AFP) — Israel released on Wednesday its longest-held Palestinian "administrative detainee."

Ahmad Katamesh, after he spent more than five years in prison without trial.

Mr. Katamesh, 45, left Israel's Damoon prison early Wednesday and returned to his home in this West Bank town next to Ramallah.

"I feel like I've come back from the cemetery. I'm very happy to be home," Mr. Katamesh said.

A senior West Bank leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Mr. Katamesh was arrested in Ramallah on September 1, 1992 at the height of the "intifada" uprising against Israeli occupation.

He had been hunted by Israeli security forces for 16 years and was reportedly interrogated after his arrest for 100 days about his role in the PFLP, a leftist faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) based in Damascus.

He was then sentenced to six months in administrative detention — a term which was then renewed each half-year until now.

The military was ordered

twice to release Mr. Katamesh, once in December 1992 by the supreme court and once by a military judge in October 1993, but each time the army simply issued new administrative detention orders.

As part of the deal for his release, Mr. Katamesh agreed to speak with Israel's two main television stations, which were expected to broadcast the interview Thursday night, his attorney, Leah Tzmel, told AFP.

The Haaretz newspaper said Mr. Katamesh also agreed to sign a statement denouncing political violence, but Ms. Tzmel declined to comment on this.

Ms. Tzmel said Katamesh's release would be followed by the liberation of other administrative detainees "as the result of growing public opposition" to the military's use of imprisonment without trial for suspected Palestinians.

The detention procedure is covered by state of emergency legislation dating from Israel's creation 50 years ago and permits persons suspected of endangering state security to be held without trial for renewable six-month periods.

Under the procedure, neither

detainees nor their lawyers are informed of the charges or evidence against the suspects and they are never brought before a court.

At least 200 Palestinians are currently being held in administrative detention, five of them for more than three years.

But Ms. Tzmel said scores of others had been released in the past six months, largely as the result of lobbying by a group created by several Israeli lawyers called Open Doors.

Mr. Katamesh came from a family of well-known nationalists and his younger brother, Ribhi, was released early this month after serving four years in administrative detention for his activities in the PFLP.

Their oldest brother, Mohammad, was left partially paralysed and eventually died of injuries suffered when he was tortured during a spell in Israeli prisons in the late 1970s.

Four other Katamesh brothers all spent time in Israeli jails.

Palestinian National Authority officials said the release of Mr. Katamesh followed a recent request submitted by Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, to Israeli cabinet secretary Danny Naveh.

## Israeli lawyer asks France to refuse SLA chief asylum

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli lawyer appealed to France Wednesday to refuse asylum to the head of a pro-Israeli Lebanese militia, General Antoine Lahad, as long as Israel refuses to release a Lebanese woman jailed since 1998 for trying to assassinate him.

Leah Tzmel, an attorney representing the Lebanese woman, Suha Bishara, wrote to French President Jacques Chirac Wednesday asking for his help in convincing Israel to release her client.

"It is inconceivable that France could welcome one of the main figures behind Israel's occupation of south Lebanon without trying to help this

young resistance fighter who long ago finished paying for an act for which she was never tried," Ms. Tzmel said in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

According to Israeli press reports, Gen. Lahad could seek political asylum in France if Israel follows through on its stated desire to withdraw from the buffer zone occupied in south Lebanon by the Israeli army and Lahad's South Lebanon Army (SLA).

"The preconditions for welcoming Gen. Lahad in France must be the immediate closure of the Khiam prison and the release of Suha Bishara and other detainees," Ms. Tzmel said, referring to an Israeli-run

jail in south Lebanon.

Ms. Tzmel has also appealed to Israel's supreme court to obtain the release of Ms. Bishara, 31, who shot and seriously wounded Gen. Lahad in 1988.

The Israeli government last month approved for the first time a 1978 U.N. resolution calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon.

But Israel said it would only carry out the pullback if Lebanon agreed to security arrangements to protect northern Israel from attack by Islamists and Palestinian fighters.

Lebanon and its Syrian patron rejected the condition.

## Palestinians hope Blair can work N. Ireland magic with Israel

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinians are hoping that British Prime Minister Tony Blair can work the same magic in Middle East negotiations as he did in Northern Ireland by pressuring Israel to make concessions for peace.

But unlike in Northern Ireland, Mr. Blair must take a backseat in the Middle East to the United States, which has been reluctant to override Israeli objections and put forward a package proposal to break the year-long deadlock in negotiations.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat welcomed the Northern Ireland peace deal and said he hoped that Mr. Blair, who arrives in the region on Thursday, "will equally succeed in establishing the peace with Israel."

However, top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat acknowledged that the Palestinians are "realistic." "We don't expect Blair to be able to solve everything," he said.

The Palestinians hope in particular that Mr. Blair, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union (EU), can promote a package peace proposal that the United States has so far balked at officially putting on the table.

"The essential thing is the American proposals. Blair should urge the Americans to go public with their plans and should pressure Israel to abide by its agreements," especially concerning overdue troop with-

drawals in the West Bank, Mr. Erekat said.

The Palestinians have expressed fears that Washington is backing away from their proposals, which reportedly would press Israel to cede 13 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian control as the first step towards reviving negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tried to prevent the United States from announcing the package, saying the 13 per cent scope is too large and instead offering a pullback of around nine per cent.

The same week as Mr. Blair's visit, U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross is expected to return to the region for the second time in a month in a new bid to find a compromise formula for the package.

Faced with the deadlock on the central issue of the troop withdrawals, Mr. Blair may focus instead on trying to clinch a deal on side issues which have remained unimplemented since 1995 self-rule accords, an EU diplomat said.

EU and Israeli officials say a deal is within reach on these so-called "interim peace issues," which include the opening of an airport and seaport and of a joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial zone in Palestinian-run Gaza.

EU officials said a push from Mr. Blair could in particular finalise an agreement for the industrial zone, planned for the Karni crossing point between

Gaza and Israel.

The key to meeting Israel's security concerns and sealing an agreement could be an EU financed, Germany-produced scanner system capable of quickly checking cargo trucks entering Israel from the zone for weapons or explosives, EU officials said.

While only a detail of the broader peace process, agreement on Karni would represent the first concrete achievement in the peace talks for more than 14 months.

Mr. Blair will also sign with Mr. Arafat an agreement creating a Palestinian-EU commission on security issues, part of European efforts to meet Israeli demands that the Palestinians conduct a stiff crackdown against Islamists.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians hope the energetic Mr. Blair, fresh off his victory in Northern Ireland, will sound a moral call to Mr. Netanyahu, who the Palestinians increasingly feel simply has no interest in advancing the peace process.

"Blair must teach Netanyahu the lessons of history. We hope Blair will tell Netanyahu to look forward and not backwards," Mr. Erekat said.

"While Blair is decisively putting all his weight behind stopping bloodshed, Netanyahu is building a future of bigotry, hatred and violence. He is creating another Northern Ireland here," he said.

## U.K. replaces Illustrious with bombers

LONDON (R) — Britain on Wednesday sent an extra four Tornado bombers to the Gulf to keep up the military pressure on Iraq to abide by a United Nations agreement on weapons inspections.

The aircraft left a Royal Air Force base in Germany for Kuwait, joining eight other Tornados based there and

bringing Britain's air power in the region to 34 warplanes.

British defence ministry officials said the four bombers were taking the place of the British aircraft carrier Illustrious, which was sent to the Gulf at the height of the standoff between Iraq and the United Nations in February.

Illustrious, which carried 14

Harrier jump jets, is returning to Britain for a previously scheduled refit.

"The Tornados are being sent out as a demonstration of our resolve to stay in Kuwait until we are completely clear that [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein will abide by the agreement with the U.N.," said a defence ministry official.



PIERCING THE TONGUE FOR SIVA & PARVATI: A Hindu devotee pierces his tongue with a five-foot iron rod in celebration of the Gajan festival in the village of Bainan in West Bengal state on Tuesday. The festival celebrates the marriage of the God Siva, one of the principal Hindu deities, and Goddess Parvati (Reuters photo)

## Algerian officers were arrested for murdering up to 70 people — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — Local officials arrested in the western Algerian city of Relizane were responsible for the execution of up to 70 civilians, the privately-owned Liberte daily newspaper reported Wednesday.

But the arrests received conflicting coverage in the local press with two other dailies — L'Authentique and Nouvelle Republique — reporting that the officials in question, the mayors of Relizane and of neighbouring Jdioua, had killed only two people.

There was no confirmation of the arrests of the officials and of members of self-defence groups from civilian or judicial authorities.

Earlier reports in the privately-owned media suggested that those arrested were installing a "reign of terror" in the region, 250 km southwest of Algiers.

Liberte published an

account by a member of the Madani family from Jdioua whose brother was dragged off by Relizane's Mayor El Hadj Fergane and other armed men to be killed in 1995, with six other people.

"I recognised all of them, they were led by El Hadj Fergane," said the witness. "Just when I realised that my brother was not the only one to be kidnapped, one of the relatives of another victim told me that seven bodies had been found at Kerkaba," near Jdioua, he went on.

He said the bodies were so disfigured they were unrecognisable.

Other accounts gathered by Liberte indicated that between 50 and 70 people had been summarily executed.

An earlier Liberte report said the arrests had followed the discovery of 79 civilian bodies in Relizane, some of which had clearly

been buried alive. L'Authentique echoed other dailies when it voiced fear that the arrests could be "an ideal opportunity to question the existence of self-defence groups and the right to self-defence."

The North African country has been in the grip of an Islamist "insurrection" since the cancellation in 1992 of the second round of general elections that the now-outlawed Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win.

More than 60,000 people have died in the violence, according to Western estimates.

Numerous reports have arisen in recent months regarding the possible involvement of forces on the government side in atrocities against civilians, though Algiers routinely blames Islamist guerrilla groups.

It noted that the "discreet and beneficial intervention" of the state took place "without the meddling of non-governmental organisations or international rapporteurs."

## Tehran mayor freed on bail

TEHRAN (AP) — Tehran's mayor was freed on bail Wednesday, Iranian official sources said, a day after riot police clashed with thousands of people demonstrating in his support.

Gholamhossein Karbaschi was freed from the capital's Evin prison, the sources said on customary condition of anonymity.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, intervened to secure the release of mayor, who was detained on April 4 on corruption charges, the sources told The Associated Press.

Mr. Karbaschi had become the focus of a power struggle between moderates and hard-liners inside Iran's Islamic government.

Baton-wielding riot police broke up a demonstration in central Tehran Tuesday by some 4,000 university students calling for the reformism's release.

His arrest had been ordered by the chief judge, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, who belongs to the hard-line faction in the government that is opposed to the reforms introduced by a group of moderates around Iranian President Mohammad Khatami.

## N. Ireland Unionists battle against compromise deal

Paisley: Blair should come up with alternative

BELFAST (AFP) — Protestant firebrand Ian Paisley on Wednesday spearheaded the campaign against Northern Ireland's compromise peace deal, challenging British Prime Minister Tony Blair to come up with an alternative.

Mr. Paisley, leader of the hard-line Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), defied Mr. Blair to set out an alternative settlement for the province in the event of a rejection of last week's deal when referenda are held in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic next month.

"Is he going to consider an alternative or force this down the throats of the people?" questioned Mr. Paisley.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Blair said it was "preposterous" to guess the result of the referenda, but added: "Obviously the prime minister hopes very much there will be a resounding 'yes' vote."

Announcing a series of rallies and protests against the deal — which would see Northern Ireland remain part of Britain, but give Dublin a say in its affairs for the first time — Mr. Paisley said: "This is a struggle for the lifeblood of our country."

Unionist anger was fuelled on Tuesday by the early release of nine IRA prisoners, denounced by the Protestant Unionists as another concession to Catholic Republicans.

DUP official Nigel Dodds commented: "It is clearly an indication that the IRA will continue to be appeased and we are going to see more

and more convicted murderers and IRA terrorists being released under this agreement if it passes."

Ahead of the May 22 referendum, the DUP, which represents 13.7 per cent of the vote in Northern Ireland, on Wednesday launched its "no" campaign with a series of press advertisements. Their message claimed the compromise accord "leads inexorably to a united Ireland."

Many commentators have said moderate Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble has taken a political gamble in accepting a deal which recognises Dublin's right to a role in the north.

Conversely, the problem for the Republican Sinn Fein is to convince its rank and file to accept an accord which does not enshrine their ultimate goal of a united Ireland.

The early prisoner release was nonetheless a boost for Sinn Fein — the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) — as it seeks to muster support ahead of the two-day meeting of its executive beginning Saturday.

Mr. Trimble won an initial victory last weekend when the executive of his Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Northern Ireland's largest Protestant grouping, approved the accord by a majority of two to one. It has yet to be passed by the UUP's rank and file which will also meet on Saturday, however.

In the peace talks concluded Friday, the issue of paramilitary prisoners was at the heart of Republican

demands and has so far incurred some of the most vigorous Unionist opposition.

Mr. Trimble's problem is that it is no longer just members of the DUP who belong to the Unionists' "no" camp.

Dissenting voices are likely to be loud and clear at a meeting on Wednesday of the Orange Order in Belfast, which is the province's largest Protestant lodge, with some 50,000 members.

Closely linked to Trimble's UUP, the order was founded some three centuries ago in memory of Protestant King William of Orange's victory against the Catholics.

The lodge organises most of the annual marches in the province which have, in the past, deteriorated into bloody clashes.

However, the marching season began peacefully this week when Protestant marchers on Monday agreed to refrain from marching through a Catholic neighbourhood of Belfast. Such moderation could be reflected at Wednesday's Orange Order meeting by a refusal to pass comment on the peace accord.

Orange Order official George Patton said only: "I'm not sure how many people have studied the agreement yet. It is a matter of their own conscience. Everyone is going to have to make up their own minds."



Mandela angers his ancestors after bee attack

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela is in trouble with his ancestors after being attacked by a swarm of honey bees at the weekend, local traditional healers said Tuesday. The sting, which the 79-year-old head of state indicated he has been given a "strong warning" by his ancestors, a healer told SABC television. Mandela said he was stung four or five times on the stomach, "also in parts that I mention to a young lady after taking a bath in Qunu, Eastern Cape last weekend. According to ethnic Xhosa tradition, visit by bees represents good luck, but the bees also forewarn of ill fortune for their sting."

Stallone being honoured for life achievement

LOS ANGELES (AP) — He may be just Sylvester Stallone, but he is being honoured for achievement. The Beach International Festival will salutes action star Friday in Raton, Florida. "I could not be more proud," Stallone, a home in Florida, said. "I am honoured to be here." Stallone's movies, including the "Rocky" and "Rambo" series, earned more than \$1 billion.

Besson is being

PARIS (AFP) — director Luc Besson is being sued by a man who claims Besson's idea for the "The Professional" film, his script and the play for Besson film, also known as "Leon," Gerardi's "say that he wrote it in 1990 and submit a film company run Besson's father CI portrays a doomsday scenario between a boy brought up by dealers and a paid and Gerardi Besson's movie is ciously similar."

Queen Elizabeth II to help Fergie buy home

LONDON (AFP) — Duchess of York is completing a financial deal with Elizabeth II that will help her buy a secure home for herself and her children. The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported. According to the newspaper, negotiations on the settlement expected to take place the next few weeks could mean that the wife of Prince Andrew, Duke of York, will move out of the marital home and into a new manor home later year.

Redford saves wildlife habitat

SUNDANCE (AP) — Robert Redford is saving wildlife habitat. The actor is donating 850 acres of land, watershed and alpine meadows to Utah Open Lands to protect its development. "The Redford family has strong feelings about the land, as they want to make sure it is preserved forever," said Julie Mack, his spokeswoman. "If the family decides down the road to sell the property, whoever does [buy it], does so with the understanding it cannot be developed." Ms. Mack said, Utah Open Lands is an organisation that works to preserve open space and farming land.

foreign minister arrives  
South African President  
Iraqi President  
Hindu Mahatma  
Arab League  
Secretary General  
Thursday. The ap  
systems of no-cas  
weapons. Mr. S  
with his Egyptian co  
New York Sun  
meetings on Iraq's  
the league said.

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## King, Netanyahu move for

By Alia A. Yoni  
The King and Netanyahu are expected to meet in Amman on Saturday where he will meet with his Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Mordechai. The meeting is expected to be a significant step in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. The King and Netanyahu are expected to discuss the situation in the occupied territories and the role of the Jordanian army in the region. The meeting is expected to be a significant step in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

## Cohen to visit

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Cohen will visit the Jordan Times  
AMMAN — U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen is expected here on Saturday where he will meet with his Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Mordechai. The meeting is expected to be a significant step in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. The King and Netanyahu are expected to discuss the situation in the occupied territories and the role of the Jordanian army in the region. The meeting is expected to be a significant step in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

## Three Israeli soldiers lightly wounded in S. Lebanon

MARIYOUN (AP) — Guerrillas attacked an Israeli outpost in south Lebanon Friday, wounding three soldiers, security officials said.

The soldiers were lightly wounded and were treated at their base, an Israeli army spokesman in Jerusalem said.

The Shiite Muslim Amal militia said its fighters attacked an Israeli outpost near Beaufort Castle in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon.

The attackers opened fire with mortars and guns, the group said in a statement. The area of the fighting is about six kilometres north-west of Marjayoun, the main town in the occupied enclave.

In another attack, Hezbollah guerrilla group said its fighters fired rockets and mortars at a second outpost manned by Israeli-backed militiamen.

The Voice of the South radio station, which is run by the Shiite Lebanese Amal militia, said a Lebanese civilian was wounded in the attack on the Ahmadieh outpost on the edge of the buffer zone.

Lebanese officials, speaking on customary condition of anonymity, could not confirm whether the man was a civilian or fighter.

Amal and Hezbollah are waging a guerrilla war to oust the 1,500 Israeli soldiers and 2,500 allied militiamen from the enclave. Israel has occupied it since 1985.

By Michael Gory  
Reuters

CANA — Mohammad Mousawi held his nine-year-old son's hand and showed him gruesome photographs hanging on a board near a row of tombstones.

He wanted the child to know that the turn limbs and charred bodies on display were the work of Israeli gunners who killed







## Japanese, Russian leaders launch no-neckties summit

KAWANA, Japan (AFP) — Japanese and Russian leaders Saturday launched a "no-neckties" weekend summit in this heavily-guarded coastal resort, as thousands of police kept extreme rightist protesters at bay.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and President Boris Yeltsin emerged from 90-minute talks in the Kawana Hotel as a political storm brewed in Moscow, and Japanese rightists blamed protests on streets nearby.

A second round of talks is to be held Sunday before Mr. Yeltsin returns to Moscow after a 24-hour stay for the informal summit at this hilltop resort, 100 kilometres southwest of Tokyo.

Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi, who travelled with the Russian leader on a helicopter from Tokyo to the summit site, said Mr. Yeltsin, appeared to be "extremely healthy" despite rumours to the contrary.

The Russian leader and Mr. Hashimoto popped in on a wedding being held at the same hotel. "I hope that relations between our two countries will go as well as your wedding ceremony," Mr. Yeltsin told the reception.

Outside, rightists cruised the streets in more than 100 vans, issuing demands from loudspeakers for the return of Russian-held southern Kuril Islands.

The disputed islands, which lie to the north of Japan, were seized by troops of the former Soviet Union in the dying days of World War II and have since blocked the signing of a peace treaty.

Mr. Hashimoto welcomed Mr. Yeltsin with a hug when the Russian leader arrived with his wife Naina by helicopter on the lawn below the magnificent hotel, built in the 1930s for golfing millionaires.

Mr. Yeltsin, 67, smiling and looking relaxed, took off his tie when he saw Mr. Hashimoto was wearing a roll-neck sweater under his jacket. Dozens of school children dressed in uniform waved flags and cheered "Russia, Russia."

Police imposed a security perimeter on streets around the hotel and barred the protesters, who had registered their demonstrations in advance, from approaching within 100 metres of the cordon.

Three rightists from one van were arrested for exceeding noise limits, said a police spokesman in the

main city of Ito. Kawana lies on the outskirts of the city.

Mr. Yeltsin was accompanied by his daughter and advisor Tatiana Datchenko, the president's spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembski and Acting First Vice Premier Boris Nemtsov.

Japan hopes to make progress in its demands for the return of the southern Kuril Islands and a raft of economic deals is on the table to smooth relations.

Among them, Mr. Hashimoto was reportedly expected to offer support for electricity development on the power-short Kuril Islands, the first such Japanese assistance for major infrastructure on the territory.

But on the eve of the summit, Russian Prime Minister-designate Sergei Kiriyenko told the lower house of parliament, the Duma, that Moscow would not hand over the islands, which lie to the north of Japan.

The Duma voted for the second time against Mr. Kiriyenko's candidature as prime minister, hours before Mr. Yeltsin left for Japan. The legislators have one more chance to approve Mr. Yeltsin's choice before the Duma is dissolved.

"I appreciate his friendship for coming here at a time when Russia's domestic politics is in a crucial stage," Mr. Hashimoto said as he left Tokyo for Kawana.

"I will let myself be natural with him. Something that had not moved for 50 years has finally started moving."

Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Hashimoto held a landmark summit last November in Krasnoyarsk, eastern Siberia, calling for a peace treaty to be concluded by 2000 and for the islands dispute to be settled.

A total 105 vans were driving around Kawana and the main Ito city, police said, but the force of 4,300 officers, including anti-riot officers, was blocking access to the Kawana Hotel.

Traffic snarls built up on the narrow roads around the usually tranquil town.

On a six-kilometre drive from Ito to the hilltop Kawana hotel, police at four checkpoints stopped cars and demanded identification papers. No cars were allowed into the driveway to the Kawana Hotel.

Police said 1,600 riot police were drafted in from other prefectures to bring the security force to a total 4,300 officers.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) applauds Naoya Goto, (second left) who is holding a wedding gift from Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto (left), during a wedding reception at Kawana Hotel, the venue of the two leaders' informal meeting. The two leaders made a surprise visit to the wedding ceremony of Goto and his newly-wed wife Kayori, which coincided with the day of Mr. Yeltsin's arrival (Reuters photo)

## Yeltsin 'rapes' Duma with Kiriyenko nominations

MOSCOW (AFP) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev accused Russian leader Boris Yeltsin of practically "raping" the lower house state Duma by renominating as premier a young reformer twice rejected by deputies.

Interfax reported Saturday. Mr. Gorbachev, who quit as Soviet president in 1991 after losing a power struggle with Mr. Yeltsin, head of the Russian Federation which was then still part of the Soviet Union, said Mr. Yeltsin had become "a destabilising factor for Russia."

"By imposing the candidacy of Sergei Kiriyenko, the president almost rapes public opinion and the Duma," said Mr. Gorbachev, who shot to international prominence

in 1985 when he became Soviet leader.

Mr. Yeltsin nominated Mr. Kiriyenko, a 35-year-old technocrat deputy rejected as prime minister for a second time Friday, for a third and decisive confirmation ballot next Friday.

If lawmakers reject Mr. Kiriyenko a third time Mr. Yeltsin must dissolve the Duma and call fresh elections within three months.

Mr. Gorbachev blasted Mr. Yeltsin's tactics as confrontational, saying they signalled his intention "to carry on with the policy that led the country into the crisis of 1993 and the war in Chechnya, and which has been rejected by the majority of Russian citizens."

The Kremlin chief's tussle with parliament over the premiership is the

most serious crisis since Mr. Yeltsin sent in tanks to crush a parliamentary uprising in 1993.

Forcing deputies to accept Mr. Kiriyenko, who critics charge is too young and inexperienced to hold the second most important public office in a major nuclear power, would only increase tension in the country.

The baby-faced reformer would be a Yeltsin puppet who could be easily dispensed with, added Mr. Gorbachev.

Mr. Gorbachev, whose dovish policies to the West ended decades of cold war tension, currently runs an eponymous foundation in Moscow which has had several run-ins with the authorities over its siting.

## S. Korea confident time on its side in North ties

BEIJING (R) — Neither Korea got what it wanted from the first high-level North-South discussions in four years, but it was South Korea's chief negotiator who was smiling and North Korea's who was somberly shaking his head as talks collapsed Saturday.

Despite the failure of marathon "fertiliser-for-family reunion" talks in Beijing, the South Koreans appeared confident that the needy northerners would come back to the table sooner rather than later.

"Considering the situation facing North Korea, we do not believe that it will refuse to continue North-South dialogue," Seoul's chief negotiator, Jeong Se-Hyon, said after announcing the breakdown.

"It will be difficult for North Korea to disregard south Korean offers of help."

In contrast, Jon Kum-Chol, Jeong's North Korean counterpart, launched a long-winded speech denouncing South Korea that was punctuated with angry gestures that spoke of his frustration.

"The new South Korean administration is using fertiliser as a means of political provocation," he said angrily. "They were trifling with their fellow Koreans."

The dejected-looking Jon blasted as "unreasonably

harsh" South Korea's insistence that fertiliser aid to the hungry north required a firm North Korean commitment to allowing reunions of families divided since the 1950-53 Korean war.

"In many ways the new South Korean government is more confrontational and more conservative toward the North than its predecessor," Mr. Jon said, shaking his head.

Analysts said that South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung, who came to office in February vowing to make a breakthrough in North-South ties, has clearly been more conciliatory to the North than past governments.

The South's tough stance on fertiliser aid, Mr. Jeong said confidently throughout the talks, was supported by a public deeply suspicious of North Korea from past disappointments.

As the talks bogged down in Beijing, South Korean newspaper editorials voiced near unanimous dismay that North Korea had not shown any hint it would change its hard-line behaviour in exchange for aid.

Behind South Korea's conviction that all roads to North Korea's salvation run through Seoul is the growing isolation of Pyongyang, which appears to be alienating friends faster than it can win over old foes.

As Mr. Jeong spoke of North Korea's isolation, explaining that Japan and the United States would not upgrade their ties with Pyongyang without a North-South thaw, a Japanese newspaper reported yet another snub to the Stalinist state.

The Sankei Shimbun reported that Chinese President Jiang Zemin recently turned down a request from North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il who wanted to make a trip to China his first foreign visit since he took power.

China, whose president usually makes time for visiting heads of even the tiniest African states, has shipped fertiliser and food to North Korea but is known to be impatient with its quirky Communist ally's refusal to reform its economy.

Even the international aid community has shed its studious politeness and begun complaining about North Korea's we-dare-you-to-care attitude towards its beneficiaries.

World Food Programme Director Catherine Bertini this week voiced frustration in dealing with Pyongyang officialdom and warned that the WFP would cut back desperately needed grain aid unless the secretive state opened wider to monitoring of food distribution.

## New rightwing movement set up in France

LYON, France (AFP) — French politician Charles Millon, expelled from the centre-right UDF party in a row over alliances with the far-right National Front, late Friday announced the setting up of a new national political grouping to be called simply "The Right."

Addressing up to 4,000 supporters here, Mr. Millon declared: "Solemnly, I announce to you tonight the creation of a national movement for political action which will finally dare to call itself 'The Right.'"

The traditional right and the left each have 61 members in the regional Rhone-Alpes assembly after elections last month, and Mr. Millon owed his reelection March 20 as head of the regional council to the votes of 35 National Front members.

Refusing to resign, he was ejected from the Union for French Democracy (UDF) on April 8.

The background is a row in the UDF, junior partner to the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic in the conservative national opposition, over whether to accept National Front support in regional assemblies.

The mainstream parties had hitherto boycotted the National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen because of its racism, despite its consistent score of around 15 per cent of votes in successive elections.

Last week the UDF expelled three leading members for striking deals with the National Front in local elections in defiance of party orders. The three had refused to bow to a party order to resign the presidencies they won with National Front support.

The UDF executive ruled in favour of the expulsion of Mr. Millon, Charles Baur of the northern Picardy region, and Jacques Blanc, president of the southwestern Languedoc-Roussillon.

France's mainstream right is torn by moral doubts over whether or not to cooperate with the National Front with its open polemics against non-European immigrants and Jews.

## Annan's decision on U.N. probe could slow aid to Congo

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — A decision by U.N. chief Kofi Annan to halt a U.N. human rights probe is likely to slow badly needed aid and investment to Democratic Republic of Congo.

U.N. officials said that donor countries and private investors would now think twice about helping Kinshasa after Mr. Annan Friday pulled out a team investigating massacres of Rwandan refugees because of systematic obstruction by DRC authorities.

But they also stressed that the United Nations was not cutting its links with Kinshasa despite Mr. Annan's decision to pull out the team, which he dispatched to DRC last August.

President Laurent Kabila, whose Rwandan-backed former rebel forces are widely blamed for the killings, has invited Annan to a May 15 regional summit on stability and economic development in the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Annan has declined the invitation. "How could he go under the circumstances," one senior official said. But he is sending U.N. Development Programme chief Gustave Speth to the meeting.

Kinshasa Saturday called on the international community to stop attaching conditions to reconstruction aid for the country, whose infrastructure was destroyed by decades of misrule by ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

"Our government has not received any external aid. Our so-called friends have done nothing for the government," Economic and Oil Minister Pierre-Victor Mpyo said in a statement.

"We no longer want someone to come and tell us that aid comes with strings attached. They have promised us aid. But this aid doesn't come just as we are planning the coun-

try's reconstruction," the minister added.

The European Union has offered the lion's share of humanitarian and reconstruction aid to DRC, totalling some \$400 million. However, the aid is contingent on Kinshasa meeting human rights and other criteria.

The World Bank has also set up a trust fund, totalling some \$30 million.

Mr. Mpyo's remarks came a day after Kinshasa dissolved and banned the main human rights group in the former Zaire and gave others three days to register. It also follows a meeting between Kabila and the U.S. president in Entebbe, Uganda last month during which Bill Clinton insisted on the need for multi-party politics and greater respect for human rights and opposition parties in the DRC.

A U.N. official noted that in future, governments would be "much more reticent" about releasing funds to Kinshasa because of Mr. Kabila's human rights record.

The official added that private investors, particularly in the mining sector, would also conclude that "there is no political and social stability in DRC in the long term."

The Congolese government must understand the need for guarantees and "transparent" government, to ensure the protection of investment in the country, the official said.

Congolese Ambassador to the United Nations Andre Kapanga said Friday: "The doors are still open, those countries that want to help us are more than welcome, those companies that want to invest in the Congo are more than welcome."

"But at the same time, we cannot wait forever, we have essentially to rely on our own resources."

## Indonesia, Brunei to cooperate in battling Kalimantan fires

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (AFP) — Brunei and Indonesia are to cooperate in battling vast forest fires in the Indonesian region of Kalimantan, a senior official said here Saturday as a choking smoke haze spread over the region.

Urging countries such as the United States to help, the head of Brunei's efforts to battle the environmental problem said "both sides have agreed to work together in firefighting efforts."

Haji Zakaria bin Haji Saruddin, secretary of Brunei's National Haze Committee and head of the development ministry's environment unit, told AFP a cooperation deal on firefighting was reached last week with Jakarta.

"It's just a matter of formalities, such as who will be involved in the mission, when we shall proceed," Haji Zakaria said.

They expected a response from Indonesia over the weekend as to the exact date a mission from Brunei could be sent to Kalimantan to assess the situation, he said.

U.N. experts say some 10,000 firefighters are needed to douse the fires, blamed on land-clearing and a severe drought.

Brunei's government urged bigger nations such as the United States to take a direct hand in firefighting efforts.

"ASEAN is stressing the superpowers have to play a part. The U.S. is pledging millions of dollars for research-oriented assistance ... It would be better if they come forward to assist in firefighting directly," Haji Zakaria said.

The United States has promised \$2 million to help Indonesia fight the fires that have razed some 280,000 hectares of forest in East Kalimantan province. Satellite

## Kohl denounces rival Schroeder's lack of agenda

BONN (AFP) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl slammed his left-wing election rival Gerhard Schroeder for having no political agenda and being interested only in seizing power, reported Germany's Welt am Sonntag weekly.

Mr. Schroeder, who was officially confirmed Friday as the Social Democrats' candidate for chancellor, "has no political programme and is only intent on gaining power," said Mr. Kohl in an interview with the paper to appear today.

On the SPD ceremony of investiture at Leipzig, the chancellor quipped that Mr. Schroeder, tipped by many to unseat Mr. Kohl, would probably "win a prize for putting on the best show."

Mr. Kohl, in power for a record 16 years, is confident of staying put, claiming that the business community and economists are hoping for victory for the governing centre-right coalition (CDU/CSU).

The 68-year-old chancellor warned that an SPD-Alliance90/Greens party coalition would seek to back-track on economic reforms launched by his centre-right.

A ruling SPD-Alliance90/Greens coalition would be "bad for economic recovery and would signal the end of all hope of job creation," warned Mr. Kohl.

The SPD is not "a new centre" but merely "the old left-wing," he went on, underlining traces of SPD leader Oskar Lafontaine's influence in Mr. Schroeder's agenda.

Mr. Lafontaine, who is reputed to be more left-wing than Mr. Schroeder, seeks to impose "the old state, SPD model" on Germany, said Mr. Kohl.

## Czech leader back in operating theatre after breathing problems

INNSBRUCK, Austria (AFP) — Czech President Vaclav Havel was back in the operating theatre Saturday for a "clean-up" of his right bronchi after suffering breathing problems, his doctors said.

In Prague, the presidency said the one-hour treatment was a success and was over at 11:00 a.m. (0900 GMT).

The evacuation of the fluids from the bronchial tubes was carried out by a hospital medical team and his personal doctors at the Innsbruck clinic where he underwent emergency bowel surgery Tuesday for a perforated intestine.

The bronchoscopy became necessary because fluids are obstructing the president's bronchi and are causing breathing prob-

lems, the Czech news agency CTK said earlier citing a spokesman for the president.

Doctors said they "cleaned up his bronchi" after fluids reduced the air flow to part of his right lung.

Mr. Havel had been put on a respirator overnight Thursday because of his breathing problems.

He had been ordered to rest more and cut down his workload Friday after he developed a slight fever.

The 61-year-old president was rushed to hospital Tuesday from his holiday home in the Austrian Tyrol. Mr. Havel, once a heavy smoker, has been hospitalised on several occasions since an operation to take out a cancerous

tumour from his right lung in December 1996.

More recently surgeons removed a lump in his throat in November.

Mr. Havel was placed in the hospital's intensive care unit after his latest health scare.

One of Mr. Havel's doctors, anaesthetist Bohumil Limberk, was called in to assist the medical team which is looking after the president.

Czech Deputy Health Minister Miroslav Cerkob told Czech radio the breathing problems did not take doctors by surprise after Tuesday's bowel surgery. Wounds from that operation were healing normally, the doctor added.







## Schroeder formally named opposition candidate against Helmut Kohl

LEIPZIG, Germany (AFP) — Germany's opposition Social Democrats (SPD) Friday formally named Gerhard Schröder as their candidate to unseat Chancellor Helmut Kohl in September general elections.

The vote came after Mr. Schröder gave a keynote address to the SPD party congress here, in which he attacked Mr. Kohl's record in office and laid out proposals for fighting unemployment by slashing commercial taxes.

Mr. Schröder received the backing of 93 per cent of the congress delegates. In his speech, Mr. Schröder said an SPD government would aim to bring corporate taxes "in line with international rates".

Therefore, "a tax rate of 35 per cent for all companies is our goal," he said, in what would be a 10 per cent reduction from the current rate of 45 per cent.

High tax rates are considered one of the key factors contributing to the current stagnation in the German economy.

"By his own standards is Helmut Kohl the chancellor of unemployment," Mr. Schröder said, taking dead aim at the record levels of joblessness of almost 12 per cent and five million out of work.

While recognising Mr. Kohl's place in the history books for overseeing the reunification of Germany, Mr. Schröder said the state was now suffering from "stagnation and paralysing

pessimism."

Mr. Kohl, 68, has been chancellor since 1982.

Mr. Schröder, 54, who is governor of the northern state of Lower Saxony is a market-oriented, media-friendly centrist who seeks to unite the SPD behind the sort of mainstream politics that have worked for Bill Clinton in the United States and Tony Blair in Britain.

The SPD congress in the eastern city of Leipzig opened with a sound and light show for the 480 delegates — plus an executive committee of 45.

Mr. Schröder stressed in his speech that "realism and purposeful activity are for us as important as ideology."

He also noted that the current centre-right govern-

ment's labour market reforms, including the abolition of job protection at companies with under 10 employees, the cut in sick pay and the extension of shop hours, had not boosted employment.

"We therefore want to correct the nonsense that this government has implemented," he said, adding that more details would be worked out once the SPD government revives the "Alliance for Work."

The "Alliance for Work" was launched by Mr. Kohl in January 1996. It sought to halve unemployment by the year 2000 but unemployment has soared since then.

Mr. Schröder also proposed a drop in income tax rates. "Our tax reform

would give a family with two children relief of 200 marks (about \$110) more a month."

The congress marked the return of the last SPD Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who has stayed away from party gatherings since the Social Democrats rejected in 1982 his centrist brand of leftism as they lost the chancellorship to Mr. Kohl.

Mr. Schröder said he wanted to revive Germany as an economic model, as it had been under Mr. Schmidt.

Mr. Kohl is trailing in the polls but he was in almost the exact same position in 1994, six months before winning the election that year. The difference this time, however, is the record post-war unemployment.



Gerhard Schröder, Social Democratic (SPD) challenger of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (left) and SPD chairman Oskar Lafontaine hug each other at the SPD party congress in Leipzig (Reuters photo)

## Korean talks resume after midnight breakthrough

BEIJING (AFP) — North and South Korean officials strained towards a final agreement here Friday after a midnight breakthrough on helping reunite separated families and supplying fertiliser to the North.

The talks resumed early Friday but adjourned until further notice as both sides apparently failed to thrash out the details.

"There was little (progress) this time," a grim-looking North's chief delegate Jon Kum-Chol told journalists after he emerged from a 90-minute meeting with South Korean counterpart Jeong Se-Hyun in Mr. Jeong's hotel room. "We'll keep in contact with each other and meet later," Mr. Jon said.

South Korean officials said the two rivals had agreed in principle to hold Red Cross talks this month to discuss details for helping reunite families split by the division of Korea in 1945.

The breakthrough came at a dinner meeting between the two sides late Thursday that lasted beyond midnight. South Korean chief delegate Jeong Se-Hyun told reporters.

He added the South wanted to fix the date for establishing a meeting place to help facilitate reunions of separated families at the ongoing high-level talks in Beijing.

But the North preferred to leave all details, including the timing for setting up the meeting place, to inter-Korean Red Cross talks. The venue and timing for the Red Cross talks have yet to be decided upon.

The North also wanted the South to ship 200,000 tonnes of fertiliser by the end of May to help grow more food to feed the starving in the famine-stricken Stalinist country, sources closed to the talks said.

The first inter-Korean government talks in nearly four years had come to a standstill over the South's demand that the North make a clear pledge to help contact and reunite separated families in return for fertiliser aid from the South.

For the first time since the Korean war of 1950-53, the two sides exchanged hometown visits by some 50 people from each side in 1985 after protracted but fruitful inter-Korean Red Cross talks.

But a long-time observer of North Korea said it would pose the North's daunting problems to find separated families, feed them and spruce them up before allowing them to meet their relatives again.

It took six months for the North to locate the 50 people who had relatives in the South in 1985.

"They have been discriminated against in the North as traitors or a hostile class because their relatives went to the South to settle there before or during the Korean war," the observer said.

Korea was divided into the capitalist South and Communist North along the 38th parallel after the former Soviet Union occupied the North and the United States the South at the end of World War II to disarm Japanese troops.

Korea was under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945.

## U.S. envoy secures Taliban ceasefire, talks agreement

KABUL (AFP) — The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations announced Friday he has secured a ceasefire from the Afghan Taliban militia and won their agreement to hold landmark talks with opposition forces by April 27.

Following a meeting of more than two hours with Taliban number-two Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, Bill Richardson hailed the negotiations as a breakthrough for peace efforts to end Afghanistan's 18 year-old war.

"It appears we have a breakthrough that if the northern alliance agrees we will have talks between the Taliban and the northern alliance in Islamabad before April 27," Mr. Richardson told reporters.

"Until then we have the Taliban's commitment that there will be no fresh Taliban offensive," he added before departing by plane for a meeting with anti-Taliban leaders in northern Afghanistan.

Mr. Richardson, who is the most senior Western official to visit Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion of 1979, said his "tough talks" with the puritanical Muslim militia has given the U.N. process a major boost.

"It depends on deeds and not just words, but we made progress here today and most importantly we have a

process started that could lead to talks under U.N. auspices," Mr. Richardson said. He said the Taliban had also agreed to release a "significant number" of opposition prisoners in the next two days in a gesture to back the agreement.

The ambassador said his aim in northern Afghanistan would be to secure the agreement of the anti-Taliban alliance leadership for a ceasefire and talks.

Speaking at the currently unused U.S. embassy in Kabul, Mr. Richardson also said he had secured progress over women's rights under the Taliban, drug production and improved working conditions for U.N. staff.

"We also made progress on women's rights and access to education, on drug cultivation and other key issues," he said without elaborating.

In the opposition-held northern town of Shiberghan, Mr. Richardson is scheduled to meet ethnic-Uzbek and ex-Communist warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam, ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani and a Shiite faction leader Karim Khalili.

U.S. officials here said it was unclear whether opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood — who is battling the Taliban only 25 kilometres north of Kabul — would attend the afternoon meeting.

## Rwandan government says army killed seventy rebels

KIGALI (AFP) — Rwandan army troops fighting alongside civilians killed 70 Hutu rebels in a raid in the central Gitarama region, the government said Friday.

The fighting occurred Wednesday in the Bulunga area, the Rwandan Information Office said, adding that the army operated "jointly with the population," who guided the soldiers.

The report was corroborated by a correspondent of the independent "news agency ARI in Gitarama." The raid lasted all day Wednesday and continued Thursday, a witness said, adding: "There were no prisoners. I saw at least 30 bodies on the ground. The official tally is 70 rebels dead."

The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) seized many weapons in the raid, including AK-47s and grenade launchers. More than 100 people were killed last week in attacks blamed on Hutu rebels — former soldiers of the defeated Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and Interahamwe militiamen — fighting the Tutsi-dominated government.

The clashes coincide with the fourth anniversary of the genocide in 1994, when Hutu extremists killed between half a mil-

lion and 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus before the military takeover of the RPA.

The insurgency, which escalated last year, has been largely restricted to the northern provinces of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, but a rebel presence in Gitarama has been known since late February.

Vice President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame said Thursday: "We still have remnants of the forces that carried out the genocide, who want to continue with the same. They cause more instability in the country, so we are fighting that, we are bringing that under control."

The Rwandan strongman said the rebels were "taking the cover of civilians" and tended to stay on the move "because of the reaction of both the military forces and the civilian population."

He said the Rwandan authorities had information that some 16,000 former FAR soldiers were in the Central African Republic and Congo "who are getting support... quietly from some European countries, and we are monitoring their activities and intentions."

Ex-FAR fighters also have rear bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## U.S. donates \$2 million to fight fires in Indonesia

JAKARTA (AFP) — The United States has donated \$2 million to help Indonesia fight forest fires and prevent further damage to the environment, a senior U.S. official said Friday.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Stanley Roth said the money would be "solely for Indonesia" to fight the fires that have already caused an estimated \$600 million in damages this year.

"Discussions are under way on the specific programmes that will be involved with this money," Mr. Roth told a press briefing during his brief visit that included meetings with Environment Minister Juwono Sudarsono and other senior Indonesian officials. "We expect some decisions fairly shortly," he added.

He said the funding was apart from a \$4 million "Southeast Asia Environmental Initiative" just approved by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and involving other countries in the region.

The initiative would include fire-fighting capabilities, means of improving the provision of meteorological data and studies on the health impacts of the fires razing

vast tracts of land on Borneo Island.

"There is additional work which needs to be done to preventing the fires in the first place," he added.

Efforts to extinguish the blazes, blamed largely on large companies and farmers using slash-and-burn methods to clear land for planting, have generally been unsuccessful in the drought-stricken province where little rain has fallen since last July.

Hundreds of thousands of hectares of land in the province on the Indonesian section of Borneo Island have been razed since the beginning of this year.

Parts of the island have again been shrouded in a haze from fires on the Indonesian side as well as in the Malaysian state of Sarawak and in Brunei, after smoke last year forced airports to shut and raised the pollution index to unhealthy levels.

The latest data collected by the East Kalimantan province's Environmental Impact Control Agency, including from satellite imagery, showed that close to 285,000 hectares had been devastated by fires in the province as of April 16, the head of the agency, Awang Faruk Ishak, said.

Mr. Ishak was quoted by the Kompas daily as saying the fires had caused losses estimated to reach at

least 5.2 billion rupiah (\$641.975), including the damage to the environment, health and ecological changes.

The fires have burned more than a third of the 198,000 hectare Kutai National Park, the province's largest natural forest park, as well as large tracts of forest in the Bukit Subarto and Sungai Wein national parks, he said.

The fires had also razed 107,448 hectares of forest concessions, and 75,677 hectares of timber estates, Mr. Ishak said.

With the exception of brief rains in December, East Kalimantan has hardly seen any meaningful downpours since the middle of last year.

Officials have also blamed the abundance of coal, lignite and peat seams criss-crossing the province for the fires, as they can smoulder for a long time underground or just under the surface and re-ignite if fanned by wind.

Officials have said all the authorities could do now to fight the fires was to rely on manual efforts because of the inexistence of adequate technology and supporting equipment.

The drought has also dried up water sources necessary for firefighting efforts.

## Portuguese premier vows smooth handover for Macau

MACAU (AFP) — Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres arrived in Macau Friday for a three-day visit and pledged his government will do all it can to ensure a smooth handover to Chinese rule, Xinhua reported.

"I pledge again that Portugal will take a responsible attitude to make sure that a smooth transition will be achieved in Macau," the official Chinese news agency quoted him as saying.

Mr. Guterres said he had full confidence that the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration signed by China and Portugal in 1987 will be implemented, Xinhua said.

"I believe that Macau will continue to be a place of stability, harmony, prosperity and freedom," he said. "Macau is already an open and multiple society, and enjoys wide autonomy in its administration and legislature. Such a structure will be kept under the Special Administrative Region after 1999," he said.

The tiny Portuguese-administered enclave is



Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres (second left) accompanied by Macau Governor Rocha Vieira (third left) arrives at Macau airport. Macau has stepped up security measures on Guterres's visit due to recent killings in the city linking to "triad" criminal gangs and the lucrative gambling industry (Reuters photo)

due to be handed back to China in December next year.

The prime minister was welcomed at the airport by Governor General Vasco Rocha Vieira and Legislative

President Anabela Ritchie.

The prime minister is accompanied by Foreign Minister Jaime Gama, Economic Affairs Minister Pina Moura, Science and Technology Minister Mariano Gago and three

other cabinet ministers.

The premier is due to meet Macao government officials, the bishop of Macau, local community leaders and Chinese officials before travelling to mainland China Sunday.

## Sri Lanka matriarch marks 82nd birthday with Buddhist service

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's matriarch Sirima Bandaranaike, a symbol of dynastic rule in South Asia, marked her 82nd birthday Friday with a string of Buddhist services.

Saffron-robed Buddhist monks chanted and prayed for Sirima Bandaranaike, prime minister for a third time in Sri Lanka, at her Rosmead Place residence as hundreds of well-wishers trooped in to wish her a happy birthday.

Sirima Bandaranaike, born to a land-owning

aristocratic family in 1916, was forced into politics after the 1959 assassination of Prime Minister Solomon

Bandaranaike, her husband. She became the world's first elected woman premier a year later.

The dynastic succession was firmly consolidated by daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga who became the all-powerful president in November 1994.

The daughter made her mother prime minister for a third term setting another record for the

world's first mother-and-daughter duo to rule a country.

She received her well-wishers while seated on a chair in front of a picture of herself taken together with assassinated Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who had been a close friend of the Bandaranaike family.

Her deteriorating health due to arthritis has fuelled rumours about retirement and triggered rivalry among several ministers who are known to be staking a claim for the ceremonial but prestigious post.

## 7 miners injured in Siberia blast

MOSCOW (AFP) — Seven coalminers were hospitalised with burns after a methane explosion in a mine in the Kuzbass region of western Siberia Friday, Interfax reported.

Doctors said the injured miners were in satisfactory condition.

A total of 35 miners were in the Lenin pit at Mezhdurechensk near Kemerovo when the blast happened, but all were rescued and a subsequent

fire was brought under control.

Kemerovo Governor Aman Tuleyev sent a special commission to the mine to investigate what caused the blast.

The Kuzbass and Vorkuta in the far north are Russia's largest coal regions, and both have suffered from the chronic wage delays and inter-enterprise debts afflicting the Russian economy. In one of Russia's worst

mining disasters in decades, 67 miners were killed in an explosion in December at Zyryanovskaya, a pit near Novokuznetsk in the Kuzbass.

Russia has announced plans to shut down 86 of its 200 coal mines in 1998, and the World Bank is funding a programme aimed at easing the social pain of restructuring in the ailing industry.









## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Abed says Livestock and Poultry Company 'has fully recovered'

AMMAN — Turnover at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) increased by 46.9 per cent in the past week compared with the previous week due to the trading in the shares of the companies that recorded tangible result in their 1997 annual reports, a broker said Friday.

The weekly AFM bulletin showed that last week's turnover amounted to JD4.7 million compared to JD3.2 million, with an average daily turnover of JD900,000.

Naim Nageeb, a broker at the stock market, said the increase in the turnover was due to the five-day trading last week compared with two days in the previous week which was followed by the 'Eid Al Adha' feast.

Mr. Nageeb said the industrial sector received the bulk of the weekly trading, with a turnover amounting to JD1.9 million, or 42.1 per cent.

"This was due to the annual results of some of industrial firms that appeared in the past few days which decided to distribute dividends to their shareholders," Mr. Nageeb told the Jordan Times.

He emphasised that among the industrial firms that attracted dealers in the past week's trading were the pharmaceutical companies and the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC).

Mr. Nageeb indicated that the services ranked second with a turnover amounting to JD1.3 million, or 28.2 per cent, followed by the banking sector with JD1.2 million, or 26.7 per cent and finally the insurance sector with JD140,000, or three per cent.

He said that trading in the services sector focused on the shares of Jordanian Electricity Company (JEC) due to the "good results" recorded in 1997.

The Arab and Housing banks took the lion's share of the banking sector trading.

The broker stressed that the trading in Housing Bank shares is expected to rise "with the bank's intention to double its capital to JD100 million and to distribute a free share to each shareholder."

The general price index declined from 170.6 point down 169.7 point, or .86 point.

Mr. Nageeb attributed the drop in the price index to dealers who were cautious to trade in the market following the 'Eid Al Adha' holiday with many deciding to wait and watch the AFM activities before taking any decision.

Out of the 87 firms that changed hands at the AFM shares of 28 firms registered increase in prices, 38 companies recorded declines while 21 firms witnessed no change in their prices.

## '97 financial results boost trading at AFM

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

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### AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179 ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (11/04/1998 - 15/04/1998) WEEKLY REPORT

DURING THE LAST WEEK	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	MARKET SHARES	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
246,000	333,500 ARAB BANK	14.1	1.16	35	2360	817490	346.00	350.00	343.00	344.00	-2.00	346.394	0.54	5
1,780	1,660 JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	23	22050	390000	1.77	1.78	1.73	1.73	-0.04	1.769	0.051	5
1,370	1,250 BANK OF JORDAN	4.1	0.00	6	1850	2450	1.34	1.35	1.30	1.30	-0.04	1.329	0.012	2
1,000	920 MID-EAST INV. BK.	65.7	0.00	2	1000	1000	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.000	0.010	1
1,760	1,720 INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.3	7.83	48	43812	78678	1.76	1.83	1.78	1.80	-0.04	1.796	0.248	5
5,500	4,870 THE HOUSING BK.	16.9	2.70	29	20974	121213	5.50	5.49	5.32	5.34	-0.16	5.385	0.042	5
1,900	1,810 JOR. FINANCIAL BK.	-	0.00	10	12347	22048	1.81	1.82	1.79	1.80	-0.01	1.802	0.082	4
470	590 JOR. CREDIT BANK	6.1	10.14	95	165724	110773	4.70	4.69	4.63	4.63	-0.07	4.686	0.279	5
2,800	2,800 ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	40.5	7.51	1	10000	26400	2.80	2.66	2.66	2.66	-0.14	2.660	0.067	1
1,990	1,910 JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	0.00	53	9620	17857	1.91	1.95	1.75	1.76	-0.15	1.856	0.051	5
1,010	1,020 UNION BK. SAV. INV.	170.6	0.00	3	151	157	1.02	1.07	1.07	1.07	-	1.040	0.001	3
1,870	1,970 JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	11.2	0.00	9	2550	4543	1.87	1.87	1.75	1.75	-0.12	1.781	0.076	1
1,470	1,620 JOR. INV. FIN. BANK/NEW	-	0.00	3	354	573	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	-	1.619	0.007	1
890	870 BEIT AL-HAL (BEITHA)	5	17.24	13	3950	3408	0.86	0.86	0.87	0.87	-0.01	0.863	0.198	3
2,940	2,790 ARAB BANKING CO.	21.2	0.00	1	1000	2700	2.79	2.70	2.70	2.70	-0.09	2.700	0.007	1

## REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.8033	0.6933	1.4980	131.43	1.4300	1783.00	2.0319	6.0485	
DE Mark	0.5946	-	0.3287	0.8290	72.90	0.7934	987.87	1.1282	3.3624
GB Sterling	1.8886	0.3076	-	2.5175	221.51	2.4104	3001.15	3.4201	10.1808
CH Franc	0.6889	120.53	0.3967	-	87.91	0.9567	1191.29	135.78	4.0412
JP Yen	0.0078	1.3708	0.4808	1.1380	-	1.0870	13.58	154.40	4.5943
CA Dollar	0.6993	1.2916	0.4225	1.0666	1.09	-	1270.80	1.4551	4.3285
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0112	0.3323	0.0638	1358.14	0.8021	-	11.39	3.3911
NL Guilder	0.4922	88.76	0.2917	73.58	84.69	0.7041	877.01	-	2.9767
FR Franc	0.1653	0.2980	0.0880	24.7058	21.72	0.2365	33.58	33.5800	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.4104	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6406	0.3082	3.6727	1627.20	3.4160
Jordan Dinar	0.2896	0.1890	0.2896	0.3317	0.6147	0.4305	0.1801	2164.02	4.8181
Saudi Riyal	2.65	1.8808	9.9491	-	9.96	0.8096	9.74	4051.25	9.0617
Bahrain Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	-	0.0838	1.01	419.50	0.9383
Qatar Dinar	3.2765	2.3231	12.2887	1.2352	11.93	7.03	5003.93	0.9383	-
Kuwait Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0206	0.9912	0.0831	-	415.82	0.9301
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4642	2.4558	0.2468	2.3838	0.1988	2.4049	-	2.2388
Egyptian	0.2927	0.2076	1.0979	0.1104	1.0657	0.0893	1.0751	447.07	-

Energy				
Oil	Last	Review		
Brent	14.36	13.94		
W. Texas	16.20	15.93		
Bonny	14.36	13.94		
Dubai	12.77	12.47		
UL Gas	167.00	164.00		

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2868	0.4811	0.15818	0.38877
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.49111	0.16183	0.40722
KW Dinar	3.2765	6.51017	1.94401	4.89356
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.78489	1.57381	3.96658
CY Pound	1.8921	3.4129	1.122	2.8292

Metal Prices				
Metal	Bid	Offer		
Gold (oz's)	308.5	309		
Silver (oz's)	6.28	6.31		
Platinum (oz's)	413	416		
AL (3 Months)	1445	1448		
CU (3 Months)	1825	1828		
Zinc (3 Months)	1114	1117		
Lead (3 Months)	575	577		
NI (3 Months)	5400	5420		

Libor Fixing				
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-12-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.5719	5.7422	5.7813	5.9063
GBP	7.4167	7.5062	7.5062	7.5000
JPY	0.8354	0.8675	0.8675	0.7083
DEM	3.6717	3.7968	3.9063	4.0824
FRF	3.5371	1.8015	1.7344	1.9375
CHF	1.4531	3.6387	3.7500	3.9888
ITL	5.5970	5.2290	4.9170	-

Main Equity Indices				
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng
New York	DOW JONES	9088.03	11.48	0.13
New York	S&P 500	1108.57	1.4	0.13
London	FTSE 100	5931.8	-70.2	-1.17
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16703.8	-179.97	-1.13
Paris	CAC 40	3862.77	16.83	0.44
Frankfurt	DAX	6268.75	-65.38	-1.04

Energy				
Commodity	Last	Delivery		
Coffee (c/lb)	182.33	Spot		
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1796	Spot		
Sugar (\$/ton)	254.7	Spot		
Wheat (\$/ton)	85	Spot		
Soya (c/lb)	27.84	Spot		
Tea (c/kg)	148	Spot		
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot		
Rice (\$/ton)	400	Spot		

JOD Cross Rates				
Currency	Buy	Sell		
US Dollar	0.708	0.710		
GB Sterling	1.19	1.196		
DE Mark	0.3923	0.3943		
CH Franc	0.4723	0.4747		
FR Franc	0.117	0.1176		
JP Yen	0.6396	0.6423		
NL Guilder	0.3485	0.3502		
IT Lira	0.3957	0.3987		

\* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

BANKS SECTOR				351	297642	1239616	INDEX NUMBER : 239.24				CHANGE : 1.1037			
2.110	1.930 JOR FRENCH INSUR.	6.2	11.26	29	49100	105070	2.11	2.22	2.02	2.22	-0.11	2.140	2.232	5
INSURANCE SECTOR				29	49100	105070	INDEX NUMBER : 123.18				CHANGE : 0.5337			
2.130	2.000 JOR.ELCTRIC PWR.	10.4	4.57	105	52954	116041	2.12	2.24	2.11	2.19	-0.07	2.191	2.353	5
2.110	2.060 JORDN ELECTRICITY	14.5	4.26	7	1244	2870	2.09	2.35	2.19	2.35	-0.16	2.307	0.041	3
5.220	4.080 RISHA MINERALS	49.3	0.00	2	1150	5386	4.50	4.70	4.51	4.51	-0.01	4.683	0.987	2
2.320	2.320 UNICL. CHEMIST. FLD.	12.5	3.95	1	100	204	3.20	3.04	3.04	3.04	-0.16	3.040	0.008	1
1.110	1.020 NATL. PORTFOLIO	42.7	0.00	88	50250	55726	1.10	1.13	1.07	1.07	-0.01	1.109	1.005	5
950	950 REAL ESTATE INV.	38.0	0.00	4	171	156	0.95	0.92	0.92	0.92	-0.03	0.912	0.004	1
410	380 JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	-	0.00	6	2100	759	0.38	0.37	0.36	0.36	-0.02	0.361	0.062	1
9.580	9.300 ALARA I.	9.2	6.62	4	343	3128	9.30	9.15	9.06	9.06	-0.24	9.170	0.017	2
1.200	1.120 RID. EAST HOTELS	18.3	0.00	3	1050	1286	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	-	1.200	0.021	1
4.410	4.150 ARAB INTL. INV. EDG.	10.4	1.90	3	650	2725	4.15	4.20	4.15	4.20	-0.05	4.192	0.006	2
960	920 SARAA EDUCATION	17.0	0.00	11	9200	8904	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.97	-0.01	0.968	0.204	3
1.570	1.520 UNIFIED CO.	6.5	7.43	72	20850	30955	1.55	1.56	1.45	1.48	-0.07	1.485	0.417	5
670	630 UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	9	12100	7673	0.63	0.67	0.63	0.67	-0.04	0.634	0.242	3
SERVICES SECTOR				215	152162	235885	INDEX NUMBER : 119.24				CHANGE : 0.4638			
1.100	1.080 ATTARJEE	-	0.00	2	4200	4620	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	-	1.100	0.150	1
2.780	2.710 JOR. CEMENT FACT.	17.2	3.79	111	55266	156982	2.73	2.95	2.75	2.90	-0.17	2.840	0.091	5
3.300	3.200 JOR. PROSPERITY MINES	8.5	3.28	11	33982	103649	3.20	3.10	3.05	3.05	-0.05	3.050	0.077	3
11.000	10.510 JOR. PETROL. RESPIRATOR	10.6	8.11	46	15216	167675	10.71	11.10	10.75	10.96	-0.35	11.020	0.238	5
5.550	5.500 JORDAN TANNING	8.8	7.27	6	554	3049	5.55	5.55	5.50	5.50	-0.05	5.504	0.055	4
1.260	1.190 WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	12.6	4.90	20	6150	8757	1.26	1.46	1.32	1.45	-0.13	1.424	0.161	3
1.340	1.120 INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	0.0	0.06	8	8476	4081	1.29	1.26	1.15	1.15	-0.14	1.237	0.070	1
5.350	5.040 ARAB PHARM. MANUF.	14.7	3.75	191	63750	338910	5.35	5.44	5.24	5.23	-0.02	5.358	0.703	5
1.290	1.200 JOR. PIPES MANUF.	11.1	7.46	28	8200	11064	1.29	1.37	1.33	1.34	-0.05	1.349	0.252	5
1.970	1.700 GARDEN HIRING	117.1	4.19	1	300	501	1.799	1.67	1.67	1.67	-0.08	1.670	0.030	1
670	620 RAJIA INDUSTRIES	6.8	0.00	6	26850	22122	0.62	0.62	0.75	0.82	-	0.752	0.110	3
6.150	5.700 DAK ALDANA DR. INV.	7.1	5.54	22	26268	15474	5.796	5.90	5.85	5.89	-0.07	5.866	0.404	3
2.900	2.710 ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.8	8.83	5	762	2152	2.80	2.83	2.82	2.83	-0.03	2.824	0.113	2
1.510	1.470 LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	16.6	0.00	95	115750	89238	1.50	1.51	1.49	1.49	-0.01	1.504	0.308	4
730	670 ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	21.7	0.00	20	33682	23636	0.67	0.73	0.67	0.71	-0.04	0.703	0.061	4
560	540 NATIONAL TRYS.	50.3	0.00	145	16427	55713	50.3	55.75	54.5	54.5	-0.25	54.64	0.74	4
430	400 INTERFER. PETRO. COMM.	-	0.00	98	90891	35744	0.41	0.41	0.38	0.38	-0.03	0.393	0.272	3
630	520 JOR. ROCCMOOL INDS.	315.2	0.00	7	24650	13200	0.52	0.55	0.52	0.53	-0.01	0.540	0.815	5
1.420	1.400 UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	13.9	5.88	13	7150	2406	1.41	1.47	1.36	1.36	-0.05	1.375	0.117	4
1.220	1.120 NATL. CHEM. WIRE. P&AC	27.4	0.00	30	17196	19665	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.14	-	1.144	0.229	4
1.600	1.560 JOR. SULPHO-CHRM.	-	0.00	34	20250	12726	1.58	1.59	1.57	1.58	-	1.579	0.450	5
1.350	1.290 ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.6	4.58	20	4601	6316	1.35	1.36	1.32	1.32	-0.03	1.329	0.092	3
1.060	920 UNIV. NOGM. INDS.	14.0	6.82	49	22900	20928	0.94	0.93	0.87	0.88	-0.06	0.914	0.302	5
1.790	1.710 JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.1	14.71	61	41327	28322	0.71	0.71	0.68	0.68	-0.03	0.686	0.517	4
1.480	1.460 RAIL. CHELORINE	10.2	6.85	20	5883	8641	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	-0.02	1.469	0.082	5
1.050	0.990 JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	14.1	10.00	87	98657	99679	1.03	1.04	1.00	1.00	-0.03	1.010	1.234	5
1.360	1.300 RIL -RAY READY WIRE	48.2	0.00	4	850	1167	1.34	1.38	1.37	1.37	-0.01	1.371	0.111	2
1.200	1.140 INTL. TORONTO	5.0	0.00	19	12340	15883	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	-	1.180	0.323	4
1.050	1.010 UNION CH. & VEG.	47.7	0.00	74	65700	69960	1.05	1.10	1.05	1.05	-	1.065	1.460	5
0.860	0.780 JORDAN STEEL	9.3	8.43	46	82289	48342	0.85	0.85	0.82	0.83	-0.02	0.831	0.549	5
0.650	0.610 MID. EAST COMEST.	7.6	16.13	96	153300	94662	0.63	0.65	0.60	0.62	-0.01	0.617	0.697	5
1.000	1.000 ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	54.0	0.00	5	1151	2151	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.000	0.019	3
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR				1248	1027027	1424505	INDEX NUMBER : 110.46				CHANGE : 0.2064			
GRAND TOTAL				1943	1525931	3004876	INDEX NUMBER : 169.78				CHANGE : 0.5007			



# Customs, taxes seen main barriers to the development of Jordanian textile industry

By Amy Henderson  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — When the Department of Customs exempted a local garment manufacturer near Zarqa from roughly JD4,000 in customs on sewing needles, accountants and managers weren't particularly thankful, perhaps because the JD4,000 is but a drop in the ocean of customs that the company pays in customs annually.

"If the government wants to 'help' [the textiles] industry grow," says Al Zay key shareholder Costa Yaghnem, "it should exempt us, in part or in whole, from the JD250,000 that we pay each year importing fabrics and accessories."

Within the span of five years, Al Zay — a joint venture between Mr. Yaghnem, his partners and an Italian company — has become perhaps the most prominent example of successful medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Jordan.

The Italian partner determines the labels that Al Zay produces — among them Ungaro and Harrods — and purchases 60 per cent of the factory's production for distribution.

Al Zay markets and sells the remaining production under private labels in the United States, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and markets its own Al Zay brand in Jordan with addi-

tional pilot projects in Beirut, Jeddah, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi.

Al Zay is likely to weather the onslaught of free trade agreements, the establishment of the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) at Irbid and the taxes imposed on textiles and accessories far more easily than the country's 1,484 small to medium size garment manufacturers who mainly supply clothing to the local market. Even still, says Mr. Yaghnem, a clear policy on the industry would be "helpful."

"This industry employs about 11,000 people," says Thuraia Salti, who recently completed a comprehensive study on the competitiveness of the industry. "We have to decide now if this industry is important to us or not and set a clear policy that supports these SMEs, that will help them restructure and be able to keep up in an era of no protection. Until now, these SMEs are facing a bleak future."

At present, the study asserts, many factories are now operating at a mere 20-30 per cent of capacity and several have closed their doors.

A lack of skilled labour and a dependence on imported textiles and accessories (buttons, zippers, hooks, etc.) have hindered the development of the sector, says Ms. Salti, while the official policy of imposing exorbitant taxes

on imported garments hasn't encouraged manufacturers to serve anything other than the local market, whose demand is generally for low-cost, low-quality goods.

"As a consequence, neither the industry nor the labour force have upgraded. Nor have supporting industries been created," she says. "Now, the customs policy — which is inconsistent anyway — is changing and free trade agreements are threatening these manufacturers in their own market."

Manufacturers complain that they pay up to 40 per cent customs on imported fabrics, while finished apparel imported from countries enjoying trade protocols with Jordan, such as Syria, enter customs-free while used clothing also enjoys a customs discount.

On top of this, the duty imposed on imported clothing from, say, Europe or Asian countries, is shrinking, and along with it, the customs differential. In 1997, the customs schedule was 35 per cent on imported textiles and 60 per cent on garments — a differential of 25 per cent.

Later that year, both were lowered: to 30 per cent on imported textiles and to 40 per cent on garments — a differential of only ten per cent.

Manufacturers say that if they could allocate the money squandered on customs, there is a potential to expand their operations.

upgrade their products and export.

"It's a vicious cycle. Most manufacturers never make enough profit to 'get fat enough' to upgrade and begin exporting," says Ms. Salti. "We have to eliminate customs on our inputs, or we have to let other countries abide by the regular schedule so that [our garments] compete on an equal footing."

Some SMEs do export, she says, but the sector's export growth rate is very fluctuating.

The study shows that 23 per cent of the industry's production is exported, but only one per cent of the medium-sized industries' production is exported while small enterprises don't export at all, indicating that the lion's share of exports are produced by the two large QIZ companies.

"Around 80-90 per cent [of the two large QIZ companies'] production is exported," says Ms. Salti. "The medium-sized are very inconsistent — one day they have an order, the next day they don't."

With a minimal amount of assistance, she says, medium-sized might be able to attract joint venture partners and begin exporting.

Mohammad Abu Tarboush, whose Dana Tricot factory is on the outskirts of Bayader Wadi Seer, says he would gladly upgrade to at least a medium-size venture, if he could find the opportunity. Dana Tricot exports a small quantity of apparel "occasionally" to northern Europe, he says, but because profits are not enough to expand operations, his small capacity cannot meet the requirements of potential clients abroad.

"[Companies] are penalised for supplying the local market," says Ms. Salti. "They are taxed on everything, while the few exporters we have are getting all the breaks."

"These small companies — which import almost all of their inputs, also do not understand all these free trade agreements [FTAs]," she says. "They don't have access to information and they don't have time to sit and analyse what they mean, so they don't know how to access markets. Someone has to get responsible and put these into a simple and readable form so [manufacturers] can take advantage."

Both Mr. Yaghnem and Mr. Abu Tarboush admit being

"frustrated" by the creation of the QIZ, and the pace at which Jordan is moving towards free trade.

"I somehow felt that, although I've been in business since 1990s, I was less 'Jordanian' because I am located in Wadi Seer," says Mr. Tarboush. "Why them and not one else? When people drafted [the QIZ agreement] and the Economic Association Agreement with the EU no one consulted our industry."

Al Zay, which has been exporting to the U.S. since it entered into its joint venture and long before the QIZ ever became part of the local lingo, now finds itself at a disadvantage to the manufacturers in QIZ.

"I am not against the QIZ," says Mr. Yaghnem. "On the contrary, I think it's great — it opens markets. But why were we excluded from it?"

Ms. Salti is more optimistic about the impact of the FTAs and is an enthusiastic supporter of the QIZ, both of which, she maintains, have the potential to upgrade the industry as a whole. But even in these areas, she explains, the advantages will be compromised unless Jordan develops a more comprehensive approach to maintain them. Jordan's advantages in the QIZ and with the EU will end in the year 2005 when the textile treaty of the WTO and the Multi-Fibre Agreement come into effect. After that time, Jordan will no longer benefit from the "no-quota" offered by the U.S. for goods coming out of the QIZ since the global textiles industry will be liberalised.

"At the moment, we have an 'artificial' feeling of being the best," she says. "We sell and praise ourselves for cheap labour and low cost of production, but this is short-sighted."

The nature of garment manufacturing is that production can easily shift from country to country, she points out, and it is as easy for a company to come to Jordan as it is to leave.

"Look at Korea," she says. "Labour costs eventually began to increase and then it became too high to be attractive, so production shifted to China and now everyone is setting up in China. In Bangladesh, the cost of labour is 10 cents an hour. Here, it's 50 cents."

Jordan has two choices, Ms. Salti explains: To exploit a short-term benefit as a step to shore up employment, or to

develop some specialised competency that will make the industry a sustainable one.

"If we go for the short-term benefit, with subcontracting arrangements, these companies will leave in 2005," she says, warning that the effect, "believe me, will be dramatic. We need a hook."

A "hook" may be better quality, efficient ports, computerised logistics or production of brand names. Italy's sustainable position in the industry, she points out, was built on its reputation of high quality brand names and quick response to demand. This philosophy applies to manufacturers within and outside the industrial zones.

"Cheap labour is just not sustainable," she says. Massive investments in the zone — set to be expanded in Irbid and to other areas — may also create an environment in which supporting and related industries could be developed, she says.

Another consequence of their presence, if investors think strategically, will be the eventual creation of a sophisticated labour pool (that eventually takes its skill and knowhow to smaller companies) and the capability to work independently to develop and export brands.

The future of the industry will be one of two extremes, says Ms. Salti, and manufacturers themselves support her claim that the onus of restructuring the industry lies mainly with the government but also requires a coordinated and proactive effort from industrialists themselves.

"We need to merge in order to accommodate large orders," says Mr. Tarboush, who admits his own experience in sharing work with other manufacturers has often degenerated into a scenario of too many chiefs and not enough Indians.

"They can also share marketing costs and technical expertise," says Ms. Salti. "This is a parallel process between the government and the industry. But they really do need the help, support and a clear policy from officials."

In addition to a reduction in customs, says Mr. Tarboush, Jordan needs good training facilities and a school for designers.

"We don't want the government to do everything, but we want it to point in the direction that it wants us to go so we can formulate our own strategies and move in that direction."

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You and your teammates will have to know how to play the game in order to win this one. Your focus has to be completely on the task. Promise a loved one something special later, to make up for time not spent together now.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You're up against difficulties again today. These problems are not insurmountable. You'll have to set priorities, but you don't need to do it all by yourself. A well-organised loved one will be a great asset.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Everybody's interested in your private life today, but that's OK. You enjoy the attention and appreciate the help. Domestic issues are interfering with your work, but it doesn't seem to be much of a problem.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) To achieve the position you want and deserve, you're going to have to practice. This could turn out to be fun, since it is your talent area. If it's not fun, you're obviously not doing the right thing — or you're not doing it the right way.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) There could be quite a lot of money coming into your account today. This is not entirely by accident, although some of it may be. This is also good day to get your jewelry reassessed. Some of those heirlooms may be worth more than you thought.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You seem to attract attention. That's not necessarily what you want, if it's any comfort, you virtually disappear when you're doing your job well. When your ego gets out of the way, there's nothing there but your skill and your desire for perfection.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) What's the most important thing in your life? Odds are, it's not what you've been doing lately. The most important thing probably has something to do with serving others. Contribute to making the world a better place and you'll feel better, too.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Focus on something other people need, again. You might be able to get rid of a few outgrown household items in the process. By donating your castoffs to a worthy cause, and volunteering your helps as well, you can do a valuable service.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Your career demands all your attention and then some. You have the information you need, but you may not know how to access it. Just do the best job you possibly can right now and the rewards will be numerous.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) There may be difficulties, but you'll be travelling soon. Allow time for delays, detours or inclement weather. Don't dip too deeply into your resources, however. Use your brains instead of your chequebook to get what you want.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) There's money going out today, possibly to pay taxes. If you go over the records again, you could save a little more. If you've got an accountant working on this project with you, request another review before you sign the cheque.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Instead of resisting a person who's been nagging you, turn the situation around. This one knows how to do several things better than you do, so why don't you simply ask him or her to do a few chores for you? Give it a try.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

## Rhodia 'New Name,' 'New Brand'

On the occasion of the creation of Rhodia Company for specialty chemicals a press conference was held in Briston Hotel / Beirut at the beginning of this month to announce a prize for environmental preservation which "Rhodia" (New subsidiary of RP-Group) will grant to the Lebanese press for the best work on the subject. Similar contests will be organised in the future across the region.

In his opening speech, Mr. Antoine Sacy the Director General for Rhodia Middle-East briefed the audience on the nature of the prize.

Afterwards Mr. JP Tirouflet / President of the giant French Company delivered a presentation about the activities of the company, explaining the reorganisation of the group Rhodia Poulenc since January 1st, 1998 where Rhodia Poulenc



Chemicals Grouped with Fibers and Polymers into one entity of specialty chemicals called "Rhodia" with a turn over of 37 billion French Franc, employing 25,000 people around the world, which includes the following divisions:

- Specialties for industrial products
- Specialties for consumer products
- Fine organics
- Polyimide
- Services and specialties

The press conference was followed by a cocktail reception attended by some prestigious business men and entrepreneurs from the region, also attending was engineer Alia Qarain Hussein/commercial director of Rhodia East / Jordan.

## THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- United force
- Nora's pooch
- Anti-Puritan
- Present starter?
- Casual talk
- Ordinary
- Toe tip
- Stoic philosopher
- Eighth Greek letter
- Thin wrapping paper
- Buddhist sect
- Rosebay
- Green Bay's state abbr.
- chart
- Martina facilities
- Pneist vestment
- Depends on
- Writer Seton
- Gaucho's cattle-catcher
- Word within 20A, 58A, 11D, and 33D
- Sioux transport
- Jewish month
- Ruling class
- Miserables
- Rip van Winkle, e.g.
- Biblical judge
- Whithered
- Not in residence
- R-V connection
- Lay down the law militarily
- Roady ridge
- Seaweed product
- Son of Seth
- Splashes in the shallows
- Remainder
- Tissue mass
- Exhausted
- Liberal
- Very in French

DOWN

- Lone Ranger's pet
- Computer hacker
- Computer post
- Herb with aromatic seeds
- Blind singer
- Ronnie
- One who gives in to pressure
- Contour
- Crimean resident
- Resting on
- Coyu fur
- Cigar dropping
- Red Sea connection
- Loathe
- Spirited vigor
- Modular parts
- She sheep
- Granite block
- Let it stand
- Cow barn
- Impudent talk
- Vigoda and Lincoln
- Lounge about
- Colorful shoe material
- Computer
- Back
- Toward shelter
- "Ladder of Years" novelist
- Life-off pressure
- Vacation spots
- Mission man
- Sat in from the margin
- Boring tool
- Beauty's mate
- Male voice
- Wear away
- Double bends
- Old adages
- Pitfall
- Actress Gilbert
- Decade years

## Peanuts

SOMETIMES I LIE AWAKE AT NIGHT, AND I WORRY, AND WORRY, AND WORRY...

THEN A VOICE COMES TO ME OUT OF THE DARK THAT SAYS, "WE UNDERSTAND YOUR PROBLEM...DETAILS AT ELEVEN"

## Andy Capp

DON'T WORRY, PET. SHE'S WELL DOWN THE LIST.

SHE'LL NEVER MOVE UP TO NUMBER TWO. THERE'S TOO MUCH SMOKE AND TOO MANY PIGEONS IN THE WAY.

## Mutt'n' Jeff

WE LOVE WE CAN'T AFFORD TO HIRE PEOPLE TO DO EVERY LITTLE THING!

THE NEXT THING YOU'D BE WANTING TO HIRE SOMEBODY TO HANG A PICTURE.

## THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"Every month we have just enough money to pay your bill—but no money left over to buy a stamp."

## JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IRROG

GUVEA

CLARRO

TALLEB

Answer: IRROG, GUVEA, CLARRO, TALLEB

## REUTE

## The Bus

### Major Curre

Currency	USD
US Dollar	
DE Mark	0.5546
GB Sterling	1.5556
CH Franc	0.5689
JP Yen	0.0278
CA Dollar	0.6933
IT Lira	0.0006
NL Guilder	2.4922
FR Franc	0.1652

### Currency

Currency	USD
US Dollar	
Jordan Dinar	1.4734
Saudi Riyal	0.2954
Bahrain Dinar	2.65
Qatar Dinar	0.2747
Kuwait Dinar	3.2753
Emirate Dinar	0.2723
Lebanese 1000	0.53
Egyptian	0.2327

### Energy

Oils	Last	revision
Brent	14.35	13.94
W. Texas	16.20	15.92
Bonny	14.35	13.94
Dubai	12.77	12.47
UL Gas	157.00	154.00

### Metal Prices

Metal	Bid
Gold (oz's)	308.5
Silver (oz's)	6.22
Platinum (oz's)	413
AL (3 Months)	1445
CU (3 Months)	1525
Zinc (3 Months)	1114
Lead (3 Months)	575
NI (3 Months)	5400

### Bourse

Bourse	Index
New York	DOW JO
New York	S&P 50
London	FT-SE
Tokyo	NIKKEI
Paris	CAC
Frankfurt	DAX

### Commodity

Commodity	Last
Coffee (c/lbs)	152.33
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1796
Sugar (\$/ton)	254.7
Wheat (\$/ton)	36
Soya (c/lbs)	27.94
Tea (500kg)	148
Barley (\$/bsh)	0
Rice (\$/ton)	400

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## First Division Basketball Championship Jazireh, Orthodoxi battle for lead

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Basketball fans are expected to fill the Sports Palace tonight when titleholders Al Jazireh take on Al Orthodoxi in the top clash of the First Division championship playoffs currently underway.

Victory Saturday will take the winning team halfway to the champions' podium as both teams are tied in overall points and will be meeting again in the second playoff match later this month.

Al Orthodoxi now lead the standings on points after turning their first half 33-34 loss to a 84-61 win over all-time rivals Al Ahli.

Al Jazireh also beat Al Ahli 78-63 (33-32) in the playoffs ruling out the lat-

ter's chance of keeping their runner-up place which they took last year leaving Al Orthodoxi third.

After losing to the top two teams in the preliminary rounds and the playoffs, Al Ahli are now third and are destined to stay there in the final standings.

With the other playoff round starting April 25, Al Ahli's poor physical conditioning and incomplete bench have forced them to rely on the individual efforts of Faisal Nsour and Yousef Zaghoul.

The lineup has been depleted with Mohammad Shamali and Marwan Ma'touq both nursing injuries, and centre Ramez Hammoudeh quitting the team for personal reasons.

The team is suffering the ill-effects of inadequate pre-season training which led to an inconsistent form, after officials concentrated more on technicalities like recruiting a coach and luring back veterans to the lineup.

In the preliminary round, Al Jazireh beat Al

Orthodoxi 92-84 and lost 73-69. However, they managed to beat Al Ahli twice 75-69, and 57-53.

After ending Al Orthodoxi's 1976-1989 undisputed reign, Al Ahli were champions in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 aided by the signing of Naser Bushnaq.

Al Orthodoxi came back to win in 1991, 1995 and 1996 and Al Jazireh ended a 30-year domination among the two rivals last season.

### PLAYOFF STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	Sf	Sa	Pts
Orthodoxi	11	10	1	921	599	21
Jazireh	11	10	1	968	645	21
Ahli	12	6	6	796	768	18

## Prince to keep his chin out of trouble

MANCHESTER (AFP) — When Prince Naseem Hamed puts his WBO featherweight title on the line against Puerto Rico's Wilfredo Vazquez here on Saturday, keeping his chin out of trouble will be his number one priority.

Hamed found himself on the canvas during a desperate opening round in his United States debut in December when he fought Kevin Kelly. Hamed shook his head clear and stormed back to win but he dare not expose himself to Vazquez in the same fashion as he defends his title for the 10th time.

Despite his advancing years the Puerto Rican is a damaging puncher and any mistake by Hamed could cost him dearly.

Therefore, Hamed's approach against a tough campaigner of 60 fights and 50 victories, 37 of them inside schedule, will be the most intriguing factor of the pay-per-view television fight.

Will there still be an large element of bravado? After all, a rapid victory over a man of Vazquez's stature would look good on his record.

And that could only enhance Hamed's reputation in America, where he is due to return for an 11th title defence on July 18, the third stage of his 19million dollar six-fight deal with cable network Home Box Office.

Newly-wed Naz, soon to become a father, said: "You've got to respect a world champion like Vazquez. He's had the WBA title, lost it, won it back and fought some good men. I respect him alone because he's come to England to try and take away the WBO belt. "Vazquez is experienced, but I'll stop him in two rounds, box him in the first, and win in the next round. I'm a lot faster than him. His time has gone and mine is coming up. I've got the power and I can turn a fight with one punch. He hasn't got a hope in hell of winning."

What happened in the heart-stopping minutes against Kelly at Madison Square Garden placed a question mark against Hamed's claim to invincibility.

Kelley acquainted Hamed three times with the canvas, but produced his equaliser to knock out the New Yorker in the fourth.

Hamed's trainer and mentor Brendan Ingle has been urging the Sheffield showman to revert to what he used to do best. Hit hard, certainly, but use his skill and mcanary reflexes to elude the counter punches.

"I don't think I gave anything away when I fought Kelly," added Hamed. "I don't think I will get hit like I did against Kelly, probably never again. I was so eager and anxious to take him out. I will be boxing, not going to war. "I told Kelly I wanted war,

he said he wanted war, so we both said 'let's have war'. But making decisions like that before a big fight shouldn't really happen. That was one of the main mistakes. "You should go out on a box the best way you can box. I will use my head, but I also want the stoppage against Vazquez. I'll probably not get hit.

Vazquez, 37, will bring huge experience into the fight. He has mixed almost exclusively in world class, but had to forfeit the WBA title in order to take this fight, illustrating the extent of the political web presently entangling the world organisations.

This will be the Puerto Rican's 22nd world title fight, 19 for the WBA crown and one apiece for the WBC and IBF, and has been beaten only once since 1990.

But his last fight against the Nicaraguan Genaro Rios in Las Vegas last November was shrouded in controversy. Vazquez somewhat fortunately took the verdict, but he looked a lot slower and the years may be catching up.

Vazquez's chin is pretty sound, but he has been sent tumbling twice in his long career, the last time against Israel Contreras eight years ago when he did not wake up until he got back to the dressing room.

It is that shortfall on speed which could be conclusive. And it is unlikely that Vazquez has met anyone with the power and reflexes of Hamed in recent years.

On the same bill, Britain's former light-middleweight world champion Chris Eubank will try to dethrone WBO light heavyweight Carl Thompson and Norfolk's WBO heavyweight champion Herbie Hide will make his first defence against modest American Damon Reed.

## Ahmad Daoud makes successful comeback

By Roufan Nahhas  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ahmad Daoud and co-driver Malek Hariri were crowned champions of the first of four national rallies organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) for the 1998 season.

Daoud, who was Jordanian champion in 1996, drove his Ford Escort Cosworth to a smooth finish after several participants had to retire in early stages. Ibrahim Mouhawesh and co-driver Nasser Shtaiwi in a Ford Escort Cosworth came in the second, and Faris Bustami and co-driver Rafi Bilemjan in a Ford Sierra Cosworth came third.

Only eight drivers took part in the event covering a distance of 211 kilometres of which 66km were distributed on 10 special stages with tough terrain on the Amman-Jerash road.

The participants passed through Iraq Al Amir, Siyagha, Mousa Springs and Mahes.

Jordan's 1997 champion Mohammad Daoud did not participate in the rally for being out of the country while Assem Aref missed the event as he is in Saudi Arabia on pilgrimage.

The rally witnessed several cars quitting the race as Bashar Bustami, Mohammad Shamaileh and Mohammad Qirm quit in the fifth stage followed by Amar Haddad who retired in the sixth stage.

Amjad Farah and co-driver Faisal Sa'doun had an accident in their Ford Sierra Cosworth but no major damage was reported.

The rally lacked the women's touch as no women team took part in this event.

His Royal Highness Prince Faisal closely followed the race and lauded RACJ for a job well done.

Meanwhile Jordan's Maya Mufti will make her debut in an international rally scene on May 2 partnered by Lebanese co-driver Hala Nasser Al Dein in a Nissan Pulsar.

Mufti, who is going to be part of Rally du Liban, marks the first Jordanian women who will compete in a national rally abroad.

## Gambill, Black advance to Japan Open semis

TOKYO (AFP) — With the exit of third seed Tim Henman on Friday, Byron Black and Jan-Michael Gambill, 10th and 11th seeds respectively, found themselves the top remaining players in the semi-finals of the Japan Open tennis tournament.

Henman, ranked 15th against Gambill's 81st, fell victim to the American's risky hard shots from the baseline with Gambill winning 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

The Briton joined the tournament's top two seeds, current U.S. Open champion Patrick Rafter of Australia and 1989 French Open champion Michael Chang of the United States to go out, leaving Black and Gambill the last two.

Tenth seed Black, fresh from Zimbabwe's historic victory over Australia in the Davis Cup tie two weeks ago, fought off a hard-hitting Hendrik Dreekmann of Germany for a 6-2, 6-3 win. "I feel my best weapon today was my returns and my baseline play in general," said Gambill, whose attacking double-fisted ground strokes were the basis of his victory over Henman in the 105-minute match.

A disappointed Henman said: "I don't think really either of us played particularly well. There were times when I played better, but my problem was I didn't execute the shots that I had to."

Black needed just 70 minutes to repeat his second round performance over Dreekmann.

In the semi-finals Saturday, Gambill will play 16th seed Andrei Pavel of Romania, who defeated American qualifier David Dilucia 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Black will take on 12th seed Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic, the winner over David Prinosil of Germany 6-4, 6-1.

On the women's side, defending champion Ai Sugiyama kept the local hopes alive by beating American Erika De Lone 4-6, 6-1, 6-1, setting up a semi-final meeting against Taiwan's number one Wang Shi-ting.

Wang was a 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 winner over 1991 Japan Open champion Lori McNeil of the United States.

The other match will be played between the 1995 Japan Open winner and three-time runner-up, Amy Frazier, and fellow American Corina Morariu.

## Wihdat win 17th Cup Winners' Cup

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Cup Winners' Cup record

AMMAN — Al Wihdat Friday kicked off the 1998 soccer season with a 4-2 win over Al Ramtha in the season-opening Cup Winners' Cup.

Al Wihdat led 2-0 at half-time, and their rivals then trailed 3-1 and lost definite chances before losing the match attended by Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sa'at Al Hassan, Jordan Soccer Federation officials and over 15,000 fans.

The match traditionally groups the Premier League and Jordan Cup champions of the preceding year. Since Al Wihdat won the 1997 Premier League and Jordan Cup titles, their opponents were Jordan Cup runners-up Al Ramtha.

It was Al Wihdat's fourth Cup Winners' Cup title after winning the trophy in 1989, 1992 and 1997. Al Faisali hold the record with 10 titles.

- 1981 — Faisali
- 1982 — Faisali
- 1983 — Ramtha
- 1984 — Faisali
- 1985 — Jazireh
- 1986 — Faisali
- 1987 — Faisali
- 1989 — Wihdat
- 1990 — Ramtha
- 1991 — Faisali
- 1992 — Wihdat
- 1993 — Faisali
- 1994 — Faisali
- 1995 — Faisali
- 1996 — Faisali
- 1997 — Wihdat
- 1998 — Wihdat

The match was a repeat of last year's as Al Wihdat won the 1997 title with a 2-0 victory over Al Ramtha. Al Ramtha's last major title was the 1996 Federation Shield.

Action is now back on the Kingdom's soccer scene as the Premier League is scheduled to start April 20 with ten teams taking part

with the last two relegated to the First Division.

The Jordan Cup is scheduled for mid-June and will group 40 teams representing the Premier League as well as the first and second divisions.

The competition will be held on a knockout basis with most of the Premier league teams playing in the second round.

The fourth major event of the season will be the Federation Shield, grouping the Premier League only and also played on a knockout basis in mid-July.

Other competitions have already begun including the second indoor competition grouping Premier League teams.

The first Division groups 14 teams with the top two moving to the Premier League and the last two relegated to the second division. The Second Division has 16 teams and the third 62.



Spain's Alberto Berasategui returns a ball to Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov during their quarter-finals match at the Barcelona Open tennis tournament. No. 7 seed Berasategui beat top-seeded Kafelnikov 6-4 6-4 to qualify for the semi-finals (Reuters photo)

Jordan Times  
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local time Sunday, 3rd May, 1998.  
Sameh Madani  
Managing Director



# Knicks clinch playoff berth

NEW YORK (AP) — Larry Johnson, playing on two sore ankles, scored 26 points and the New York Knicks clinched a playoff berth Thursday night with a 108-79 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Chris Mills added 21 points for the Knicks, who won for the second time in their last seven games, while Allan Houston had 14 and Chris Childs 13.

A three-point play by Buck Williams with 16 seconds left in the first quarter made it 29-27 and put New York ahead for good, and the Knicks opened the second quarter with six layups and two 3-pointers by John Starks to expand their lead to double digits. Doug Christie led the Raptors with 14 points.

• **Jazz 99, Kings 86:** In Salt Lake City, Karl Malone had 21 points and eight rebounds and Utah improved the NBA's best record to 61-19.

The Jazz moved a game

ahead of Chicago and Seattle (60-20) for home-court advantage throughout the playoffs.

The Jazz opened a 20-point second-quarter lead. The Kings made a 22-10 run in the third quarter and cut Utah's lead to eight points, but the Jazz scored five points in the final two seconds of the quarter. Greg Ostertag tipped in a shot with two seconds to play, and Howard Easley stole Sacramento's inbound pass and made a 3-pointer from near midcourt as time expired.

Utah won its 12th straight home game and finished with a 36-5 home record. Tariq Abdul-Wahad and Corliss Williamson each had 14 points for Sacramento, which lost its ninth straight road game.

• **Spurs 110, Grizzlies 97:** In Vancouver, British Columbia, Tim Duncan had 32 points and 10 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Vancouver

Grizzlies 110-97 Thursday night.

Duncan also had six assists and six blocked shots as the Spurs completed a season sweep of the Grizzlies.

Jaren Jackson had 20 points for San Antonio, while Will Perdue had 18 points and 10 rebounds. Reggie Geary came off the bench for 13 points.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim led Vancouver with a season-high 32 points.

• **Trail Blazers 99, Clippers 90:** In Portland, Oregon, Rasheed Wallace scored 11 of his 21 points in the decisive third quarter to lead Portland over Los Angeles.

The Blazers outscored the Clippers 27-16 in the third quarter and led 77-68 entering the fourth quarter. The Clippers cut the lead to seven points with 6:58 remaining on Ike Austin's basket, but the Blazers scored the next seven points — five by Isaiah Rider —

for the win.

Arvydas Sabonis had 20 points and 12 rebounds for his 36th double-double of the season, while Rider and Damon Stoudamire each scored 17.

The Clippers were led by Austin's 23 points and 11 rebounds.

• **Warriors 88, Mavericks 82:** In Oakland, California, Jim Jackson scored 25 points, including a game-clinching layup with 18.8 seconds left, as Golden State used a game-ending 10-2 run to defeat Dallas.

Golden State (18-63) won consecutive games for just the fourth time this season and will go into Saturday's game against Vancouver looking for its first three-game winning streak of the year.

Delk scored 22 and Dampier added 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Warriors. Michael Finley led Dallas with 20 points.



Lokomotiv Moscow's Alexei Kosolapov (R) stretches to the ball as he fights with Stuttgart Germany's Krasimir Balakov during their Cup Winners Cup semifinal second leg match (Reuters photo)

## European Cup Winners' Cup Chelsea's Hughes hits winner for showdown with Stuttgart

LONDON (AFP) — Chelsea substitute Mark Hughes hit the winner for a 3-1 fightback victory over Vicenza in the European Cup Winners Cup semifinal here on Thursday.

Hughes, who also scored the winner for Manchester United in the 1991 European Cup Winners Cup final, completed an impressive turnaround as the London club now face VfB Stuttgart, who beat Lokomotiv Moscow 3-1 on aggregate, in the May 13 final in Stockholm.

Chelsea are reported to be on a £100,000 (about \$160,000) victory bonus per man and they earned every penny at Stamford Bridge.

Pasquale Luiso hit the opener in the 32nd minute to put them 2-0 ahead on aggregate meaning Chelsea had to score three for victory. But three strikes did not prove an unreasonable target as Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet equalized within three minutes and Gianfranco Zola then Hughes hit further goals in the second half.

Vicenza had Massimo Ambrosini sent off three minutes from the end after being shown his second yellow card by referee Marc Batta of France for a bad tackle on Gianluca Vialli but by then Chelsea were firmly in control.

After Luiso's goal, drilled into the top corner, Poyet gave Chelsea a glimmer of hope by knocking in a rebound for the equaliser on the night to mark his first start since rupturing a knee ligament in October.

Graeme Le Saux's left-wing cross was beaten out only as far as Zola at the edge of the box. His drive was also blocked but Poyet was ideally placed to put away the rebound. Zola blew the

match wide open and almost lifted the roof off Stamford Bridge with a glorious header to put Chelsea within one goal of their target six minutes into the second half.

He owed most of it to a thrilling run by Vialli who skated down the right after Vicenza gave the ball away and sent over a wonderful far-post cross which Zola met at full tilt to explode into the net with his header.

As the Chelsea pressure mounted, coach Graham Rix made a double substitution — sending on Mark Hughes and Laurent Charvet in place of Morris and Newton.

The move brought almost immediate dividends when Hughes snapped up the crucial third goal for Chelsea on 76 minutes. De Goey's long clearance was headed on by the Welshman 30 yards out and he then spun his marker to run on and launch an unstoppable half-volley that put Chelsea in the final.

VfB Stuttgart striker Fredi Bobic was once again a jinx player against Lokomotiv Moscow as he scored the only goal in their 1-0 win in front of 22,000 fans in Moscow. It was the Slovenia-born Bobic, now a member of the German national squad, who scored the winner in VfB Stuttgart's 2-1 first-leg victory in Germany two weeks ago. A confident Bobic had warned the Russian's before the match.

"We have only come here to do one thing, win!" announced the 26-year-old Bobic, who has scored 12 goals in the Bundesliga and now six in Europe this season. But there was bad news for the German side. Defenders Martin Spanning and Frank Verlaar were both

booked by Danish referee Kim Milton Nielsen to collect their second yellow card of the tournament and will miss the May 13 final against Chelsea.

Coach Joachim Low was particularly disappointed about Verlaar's omission. "Verlaar played superbly," Low said. "His absence will weight heavily on us."

Stuttgart's last appearance in the UEFA Cup final was a 5-4 aggregate loss to a Diego Maradona-inspired Napoli in 1989.

"The final will be a great occasion for the coach, and the team," said Stuttgart president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder. "I have been president for 22 years and we have reached a European final for a second time."

That is an incredible achievement. Mayer-Vorfelder gave his underfire coach guarantees about his job. "We will continue with Low till the end of the season," he said to quell rumours that Low was to be axed to make way for Nuremberg coach Felix Magath.

Meanwhile Bobic said: "It was a tough match. The pitch was not as bad as the Spartak Moscow/Inter Milan match but it was pretty poor. But it has been an incredible success. A player cannot imagine anything better than this and we are all really looking forward to the final in Stockholm."

It was also a special day for goalkeeper Franz Wohlfahrt as his daughter Conny was also celebrating her 10th birthday. "It is an unbelievable feeling," said Wohlfahrt, whose goal was hardly threatened during the match.

## Robson in Gazza plea to Hoddle

MIDDLESBROUGH (AFP) — Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson is to ask England boss Glenn Hoddle to excuse star players Paul Gascoigne and Paul Merson from international duty against Portugal next week.

Both Boro players have been called up for Wednesday's Wembley clash but could be back in action for the First Division promotion-chasers just 48 hours later when their club meet Port Vale.

"I don't know what is in Glenn's mind and I'll contact him to see what his intentions are regarding Gazza and Merse," said Robson.

"England play on Wednesday and we play on Friday. There is no problem about them turning up to join the squad, they have the weekend off anyway."

## Bobic once again Lokomotiv's jinx

MOSCOW (AFP) — VfB Stuttgart striker Fredi Bobic was once again a jinx player against Lokomotiv Moscow as he scored the only goal in their 1-0 European Cup Winners Cup semi-final win in front of 22,000 fans here on Thursday.

It was the Slovenia-born Bobic, now a member of the German national squad, who scored the winner in VfB Stuttgart's 2-1 first-leg victory in Germany two weeks ago. A confident Bobic had warned the Russian's before the match.

"We have only come here to do one thing, win!" announced the 26-year-old Bobic, who has scored 12 goals in the Bundesliga and now six in Europe this season. But there was bad news for the German side. Defenders Martin Spanning and Frank Verlaar were both booked by Danish referee Kim Milton Nielsen to collect their second yellow card of the tournament and will miss the May 13 final in Paris against Chelsea.

## 'Crazy Gang' out to spoil Arsenal title push

LONDON (AFP) — An irresistible force will meet an immovable object on Saturday when Arsenal aim to overhaul Manchester United at the top of the English Premiership with victory over party-poopers Wimbledon.

Arsenal, who have two games in hand over United, have closed the gap on the reigning champions to just one point following a remarkable streak of form of 11 wins and three draws in their last 14 league matches. And Monday's 4-1 demolition of Blackburn, a team built on strong defence and sound organisation, left most pundits wondering whether there was any team who could now stop the Gunners' relentless drive to the championship title.

But if anyone can,

Wimbledon can.

The south London outfit have a history of spoiling the day for England's more glamorous clubs with their non-sensational approach to the game.

Their pranks and spoiling tactics — including putting salt in the opposition's tea at half-time — are legendary and though they have shed much of their 'Crazy Gang' image, they remain a team that others hate to play.

Joe Kinnear's men are currently enjoying a mini streak of good form themselves which has seen them not concede a single goal in their last four matches, including three goalless home draws and a 1-0 win at Southampton.

In total, the Dons have let in only 15 goals away from home all season.

Arsenal's watertight

defence — 28 goals conceded in 32 league games — are unlikely to be troubled by the Dons' misfiring strikers. But on Arsenal's notoriously small Highbury pitch the home side could find it hard work trying to break down the visitors, especially if, as expected, the Dons put most men behind the ball.

Wimbledon also have a superb record at Highbury where a Vinnie Jones goal guided them to a 1-0 victory last season.

Ceri Hughes is confident that Wimbledon can shut out Arsenal Wenger's men with a draw that would all but guarantee their survival in the Premiership and blow a major hole in Arsenal's hopes of a League and Cup Double.

"Arsenal are on for the Double, and I'm sure they'll be up for it — but any team that play us know that they're going to get a difficult game," says the midfielder.

"Having beaten Arsenal there last year, I'm sure they'll be a bit wary of us. We'll do our homework on them and hopefully come away with a point or even a win."

United, meanwhile, face Newcastle at Old Trafford which — in theory — should prove to be a difficult encounter.

But Newcastle's form has been so poor this season that the reigning champions should win at a canter and preserve their slender lead over the Gunners.

But Kenny Dalglish's side, who scraped a 2-1 win over fellow strugglers Barnsley on Monday, are still not guaranteed Premiership football next season and they will need no extra motivation against the team who pipped them for the title in 1996.

United are likely to be without Ryan Giggs who suffered a recurrence of his hamstring injury in last week's 1-1 home draw against Liverpool while Ronny Johnsen could be set to miss the rest of the season with an ankle injury.

Down at the bottom of the table, Barnsley and Tottenham meet in a crucial relegation clash in which defeat for either side would virtually condemn them to first division football next season.

## Federation Cup setback for Russians

PERTH (AFP) — Russia's preparations for their Federation Cup tie against Australia, starting here Saturday, were thrown into confusion after their number two singles player, Ekatarina Syssoeva, became ill.

Syssoeva, 16, developed nausea early Friday and was whisked away from the city block immediately after the draw for the world group 11 first round ties, without even attending the brief media conference.

"I hope it is not a serious problem, but we will not know until later," said Russian captain Konstantin Bogorodsky.

Syssoeva's team-mate, Tatiana Panova, was more confident, saying: "I think she'll be fine for tomorrow."

Syssoeva's sickness is a further blow for the Russians, already reeling after the withdrawal of their regular top two players, Anna Kournikova and Elena Likhovtseva.

Syssoeva, ranked 399th in the world, is scheduled to play Rachel McQuillan (60th) in Saturday's second singles clash.

In the opening meeting of the tie Saturday, Panova, ranked 83rd, comes up against Kerry-Anne Guse (65th).

In the reverse singles Sunday, Panova takes on McQuillan, while Syssoeva and Anastasia Myskina confront McQuillan and Renae Stubbs.

Australian captain Lesley Bowrey was pleased with the draw.

"We're confident and ready to go," she said. "If the girls play as well as they have been this week, I'm confident they will win the tie."

Bowrey conceded the singles selection had been difficult, especially in view of the unlucky Annabel Ellwood's excellent lead-up.

"In the end, Rachel and Kerry-Anne had the runs on the board with their most recent grass court campaign," she said.

### GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HIRSH  
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#### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AAKJ3 QAJ9874 OK A87

The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1A Pass 1A Pass  
2A Pass 2A Pass  
3A Pass 3A Pass  
4A Pass 4A Pass  
5A Pass 5A Pass  
6A Pass 6A Pass  
7A Pass 7A Pass  
8A Pass 8A Pass  
9A Pass 9A Pass  
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95A Pass 95A Pass  
96A Pass 96A Pass  
97A Pass 97A Pass  
98A Pass 98A Pass  
99A Pass 99A Pass  
100A Pass 100A Pass

What do you bid now?

A - Although your side almost certainly does not have an eight-card spade fit, a reverse bid of two spades is still the easiest way to describe your hand — your suit is a little weak for a jump to three hearts, which is no longer forcing anyway. When you rebid your hearts on the third round, partner will know you have a strong 4-6 in the majors.

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AK4 QK74 QAJ1093 AAK

The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1A Pass 1A Pass  
2A Pass 2A Pass  
3A Pass 3A Pass  
4A Pass 4A Pass  
5A Pass 5A Pass  
6A Pass 6A Pass  
7A Pass 7A Pass  
8A Pass 8A Pass  
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95A Pass 95A Pass  
96A Pass 96A Pass  
97A Pass 97A Pass  
98A Pass 98A Pass  
99A Pass 99A Pass  
100A Pass 100A Pass

What do you bid now?

A - Your doubleton queen of spades might or might not be of any value. Even so, to bid anything less than four hearts now would be a gross dereliction of duty, and we don't want to be accused of that. You have enough distributional assets and trump support to compensate for that possible deficit.

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKQJ3 QK82 AKKQ87

The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1A Pass 1A Pass  
2A Pass 2A Pass  
3A Pass 3A Pass  
4A Pass 4A Pass  
5A Pass 5A Pass  
6A Pass 6A Pass  
7A Pass 7A Pass  
8A Pass 8A Pass  
9A Pass 9A Pass  
10A Pass 10A Pass  
11A Pass 11A Pass  
12A Pass 12A Pass  
13A Pass 13A Pass  
14A Pass 14A Pass  
15A Pass 15A Pass  
16A Pass 16A Pass  
17A Pass 17A Pass  
18A Pass 18A Pass  
19A Pass 19A Pass  
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28A Pass 28A Pass  
29A Pass 29A Pass  
30A Pass 30A Pass  
31A Pass 31A Pass  
32A Pass 32A Pass  
33A Pass 33A Pass  
34A Pass 34A Pass  
35A Pass 35A Pass  
36A Pass 36A Pass  
37A Pass 37A Pass  
38A Pass 38A Pass  
39A Pass 39A Pass  
40A Pass 40A Pass  
41A Pass 41A Pass  
42A Pass 42A Pass  
43A Pass 43A Pass  
44A Pass 44A Pass  
45A Pass 45A Pass  
46A Pass 46A Pass  
47A Pass 47A Pass  
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93A Pass 93A Pass  
94A Pass 94A Pass  
95A Pass 95A Pass  
96A Pass 96A Pass  
97A Pass 97A Pass  
98A Pass 98A Pass  
99A Pass 99A Pass  
100A Pass 100A Pass

What do you bid now?

A - The bidding has not developed as well as you might have hoped. Still you have to complete the description of your hand, and the logical way to proceed is to confirm a second five-card suit. Rebid four clubs.

**PHILADELPHIA '1'**  
Morgan Freeman & Ashley Judd ... in  
**KISS THE GIRLS**  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

**PHILADELPHIA '2'**  
Yusra & Ilham Shahin ... in  
**DANTELLA**  
(ARABIC)  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

**PLAZA**  
The biggest cinema production  
**TITANIC**  
Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.

**CONCORD**  
ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI  
- KAMANANA  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30  
Adel Imam & Yusra ... in  
RISALA ILA AL WALI  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00

**GALLERIA 2**  
ABDOUN  
GRAND OPENING  
**TITANIC**  
Shows: 11:00, 2:00, 5:15, 8:30, 12:00

**GALLERIA 1**  
ABDOUN  
GRAND OPENING  
**TITANIC**  
Shows: 3:30, 7:00, 10:30  
The film is also on at 12:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

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**Don't Laugh Please**  
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at 8:30 p.m.  
For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155

## First Div Jazireh

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Basketball fans are expected to fill the Sports Palace tonight when titleholders Al Jazireh take on Al Orthodoni in the top clash of the First Division championship playoffs currently underway.

Victory Saturday will take the winning team halfway to the champions' podium as both teams are tied in overall points and will be meeting again in the second playoff match later this month.

Al Orthodoni now lead the standings on points after turning their first half 33-34 loss to a 84-81 win over all-time rivals Al Ahli.

Al Jazireh also beat Al Ahli 78-63 (33-32) in the playoffs' ruling out the latter.

## Prince to chin out o

MANCHESTER (AFP) — When Prince Naseem Hamed puts his WBO featherweight title on the line against Puerto Rico's Wilfredo Vazquez here on Saturday, keeping his chin out of trouble will be his number one priority.

Hamed found himself on the canvas during a desperate opening round in his United States debut in December when he fought Kevin Kelly. Hamed shook his head and stormed back to win but he dare not expose himself to Vazquez in the same fashion as he defended title for the 10th time.